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THE RIDGELYS OF DELAWARE & THEIR CIRCLE

What Them Befell

IN COLONIAL & FEDERAL TIMES: LETTERS 1751-1890

THE RIDGELY HOUSE ON DOVER GREEN, BUILT 1728

THE RIDGELYS OF DELAWARE & THEIR CIRCLE

What Them Befell

IN COLONIAL & FEDERAL TIMES: LETTERS 1751-1890

EDITED BY MABEL LLOYD RIDGELY

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1135669

These Letters

are dedicated to my grandchildren, Philippa Lloyd Horsey and Henry Ridgely Horsey, and to those young people of today who—like the group growing up at Eden Hill in the 1790's—have an affectionate concern for those around them and reverence for the traditions of their forefathers.

Bert Smith — 10.00

Sir, more than kisses, letters mingle Soules:
For, thus friends absent speake.

—from *Letters to Severall Personages.*
JOHN DONNE.

Foreword

IT is, indeed, a pleasure to be accorded some small part in connection with the publication of this most unusual volume.

Rare is the circumstance that a single family for upwards of two centuries has maintained an enviable and commanding position in the social and political life of one community. More unusual still is the fact that there has been preserved, and now partly published, an extensive correspondence from which we can more clearly glimpse their private lives—what they did and whom they knew and how they lived—and thus see them emerge from the shadowy dimness of tradition into the bright light of reality itself.

Carlyle said, "History is the essence of innumerable biographies." Local and social history, created by those for whom no biographies exist, can be found only in the lives of those men and women who figure in the tales and anecdotes which lure us so pleasantly to the past.

For those who can claim no kinship with the authors of the letters is given a clearer picture of the social life of an era that has gone—well-springs that furnish us with an increased knowledge of a period, the forerunner of our own.

For those connected by blood or marriage with the authors is given an added interest. The letters will unfold a wealth of tradition and of fact for which they may have sought but which, until now, has been unavailable. Especially is this true if they be like Franklin who, in his autobiography, says, "I have ever had pleasure in obtaining any little anecdotes of my ancestors."

To the editor and compiler of the letters must come a special joy. Not only has she added greatly to the sum of period knowledge, but she has opened the long-silent lips and brought the actors back to life and allowed them to tell their own stories in their own words.

RICHARD S. RODNEY,
President of the Historical Society of Delaware

Acknowledgment

My appreciation is due to Harcourt Brace for allowing me to use some episodes in Harry Emerson Wildes' *Anthony Wayne;* to Leon deValinger, State Archivist, for repeated courtesies; to Virginia Shaw of the Archives staff for accompanying me down eighteenth-century lanes in Dover to the old Dover Green and the arrival of the postman; to Agnes Perkins, she of Wellesley, who forgot my editorial failings in her friendship for me and in her delight in little Charles and his "Honoured Father"—she never "failed" me tho' the passing mark was often faint; to the owners of old portraits who so generously allowed me to include them in the illustrations and to the Frick Art Reference Library for kind coöperation; to Richard S. Rodney, President of Delaware's Historical Society, for his gracious foreword and to Charles Coleman Sellers for his advice; to my many typists who retyped so patiently, especially with affection to my long-suffering daughter and granddaughter. Thanks to you all. I'd do it all over again to please you better, but time presses.

An apology: *to old Saint Peter's, Smyrna, for Saint Ann's rudeness in pushing him aside and taking his honored place on page 332.*

M. L. R.

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Introduction

MORE than sixty years ago twenty-eight bushels of old letters and documents were brought to light from the loft of the old Ridgely house on Dover Green. Many of them were more than a century old at that time. A few dated back to the latter years of the seventeenth century and some were penned before the Revolutionary War.

When Henry Moore Ridgely died in 1847 his widow, Sally Ann Comegys, the stepmother of his children, caused the documents and letters in his files to be moved into the attic. They included a great part of the correspondence of three generations. Until her death in 1887 they remained untouched except by damp and mould. A short time thereafter, Henry Moore Ridgely's oldest daughter, Ann Ridgely du Pont, in a thorough going-over of the old house rescued them from their hiding place. Ann's mother had died when she was a young woman and she had from that time until her marriage presided over the house on the Green and had been a veritable mother to her younger brothers and sisters. She loved the house all the more because she had spent many years in caring for it and she treasured all that belonged to its past. At her death in 1898 she left the letters to her daughter, Amelia Elizabeth du Pont. Later they came into the possession of her granddaughter, Ann Ridgely Peyton, and lay unread for years.

In 1893, Henry Ridgely, a grandson of Henry Moore Ridgely, had married Mabel Lloyd Fisher, and the following year we came to live in the old house. In 1938 Ann Peyton asked if she might send the letters back to Dover and suggested that I go over them and see if they were worth preserving. I was very glad to comply with this request. I had heard Ann Peyton's mother speak of the letters and while I did not realize their importance, nevertheless I felt it would be pleasant to review them. I had then lived in the old house for more than forty years and had myself collected several hundred early nineteenth-century family papers.

As one grows older some things make a partial compensation for the loss of youth. The revival of past days is perhaps the most sat-

isfying, making old things come alive in memory, things that were new when one was young, and beyond those times, the years of preceding generations. In opening these letters which had lain untouched for many decades, I had varied emotions, and always the surprise or pleasure or pain was tempered with embarrassment. I felt that I was prying into the intimate affectionate intercourse of people who, lying in the churchyard not far away, were helpless to protect themselves from my curiosity or erect a shield from my searching eyes. There was a special reluctance to open a letter which, folded intricately to form its own envelope, carried these words across an inner fold, "Please burn as soon as read." It was not only curiosity that overcame the reluctance, but the ever growing illusion that I was almost a sharer in the relation between the writer and correspondent. The letters made daily happenings of past times real. The writers became friends, well-known, appreciated, and I an intimate observer within their circle—a strangely knowing observer who could foresee the final chapter, could sorrow with the writers in loss or anxiety or rejoice with them in their pleasures and yet, looking on further, could see the scene beyond. Always my interest has been sympathetic.

As table after table was covered with letters of early days and there were ever more and more bundles to untie and read, I was overwhelmed. I realized that I could not devote the space of one more room to the letters or I should be dispossessed of my house. I consulted our State Archivist, Leon deValinger, as to the importance of the collection. He recognized its value as a source of light on a way of living in Delaware in the eighteenth century and through most of the nineteenth, and suggested that it should be placed in the Delaware Archives. Ann Ridgely du Pont's grandchildren gladly gave the letters to the Archives, and they are now filed in the vaults in the Hall of Records in Dover. They are readily accessible for reference and carefully preserved for future times.

At the State Archivist's suggestion that a Calendar of the letters would be useful to students interested in conditions in the Middle Atlantic region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, certain members of the family joined me in subscribing the cost of publication.

The Archives' staff has arranged the material and the first volume is now in the hands of the printer.

I feel, however, that it is interesting to read entire letters arranged consecutively. Especially interesting are those written by children and young adults, or by older persons concerned with the health and education and culture of young people growing up under the conditions of life in the colonies or in the early years following the Revolution. Many letters of children are included: girls and boys away at school or visiting their relatives in Wilmington, Newcastle, Philadelphia, and Newport. These letters have drawn tears and smiles blended and have given me keen delight which has grown as I proceeded with my task. I know they will be of lively interest to some descendants of the writers, and I believe to others who wish to know more of the conditions of daily life in Delaware in the years from the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth.

From the several thousand in the collection I have chosen for the most part the intimate letters of parents to their children or to those entrusted with their education and welfare, and letters of the young people themselves: those that discuss manners, studies, accomplishments, and occupation; letters of courtship and those relating to marriage; letters describing the social scene of the 1790's in Philadelphia by Williamina Cadwalader, and country life at Eden Hill Farm in Kent County on Delaware.

There are letters relating to the romance of General Anthony Wayne and Mary Vining, and to that of Ann Ridgely's niece, Janet Moore, and her young husband, Jacob Jones, a Commander in the American Navy. Janet's life ended while her hero was a captive of the Tripolitan pirates and before his distinguished victories in the War of 1812.

In order to understand the interrelation of the correspondents and the background of the Dover family, it is well to know something of their antecedents; therefore a brief outline follows, beginning with the arrival of the family in Maryland.

Henry Ridgely came from England, probably from Devonshire, about 1659, bringing his wife and children, and took up land in "Providence," Maryland. This settlement had been so named by Puritans

from Virginia who removed to Maryland about 1649. Cecil Calvert, Lord Baltimore, ordered it "erected into a County" and named for his wife, Anne Arundel. Many of the settlers had "seated themselves" at the mouth of the Severn River on the Chesapeake Bay and this settlement, having a fine waterfront and harbor, grew into a town. It was named Annapolis in honor of Queen Ann in 1694. The next year it succeeded old St. Mary's as the capital of Maryland.

Henry Ridgely was major, lieutenant-colonel, and finally colonel of militia in Anne Arundel County. For many years he was a member of the Assembly of Maryland and a member of the Governor's Council. In 1683 Colonel Ridgely was a commissioner in Anne Arundel County for "buying, surveying, laying out, and adminstering townes, ports, and places at which foreign trade should be carried on." The places specified in the County were "at the towne land at Proctor's and at South River on Colonel Burgess' land and at Herring Creek." In 1694 he was one of the Quorum Commissioners of the Peace and in 1695 one of three appointed to oversee construction of the "New Court House." He was made a vestryman of Saint Ann's Parish in 1705. His homestead was called Catlin.

A neighbor and friend of Colonel Henry Ridgely was Nicholas Greenberry. He was colonel of militia for both Anne Arundel and Baltimore Counties; member of the Governor's Council; Justice of the Provincial Superior Court and of the Vice-Admiralty Court on the western shore. From October 3, 1693 to May 1, 1694, he served as Acting Governor in the absence of Edmund Andros, who was in England. Colonel Greenberry and Colonel Ridgely were fellow commissioners under the 1683 Act for the Advancement of Trade, for the laying out of the town and port of Anne Arundel, formerly the town land at Severn, and for the "better ordering and regulating the inhabitants of Annapolis as well as in seating and building the same." Other commissioners were Francis Nicholson, Sr., Thomas Lawrence, Thomas Tench, Esq., Major John Hammond, Edward Dorsey, James Sanders and Captain Richard Hill. Colonel Greenberry was recommended to Council by Colonel Copley and the merchants, September, 1691. In 1692, Captain Burgess was ordered to surrender to Colonel Greenberry "the public arms and ammunition in his custody." The Colonel

was given general charge of setting up forts against "foreign Indians." These were the warlike Iroquois tribes who at times menaced the northern parts of the Province. He showed his public spirit by subscribing 2,000 pounds of tobacco toward a school—this commodity was often used at that time instead of currency. In 1691, Colonel Greenberry signed a list of articles complaining against Lord Baltimore; many complaints were lodged against the Proprietor because of religious differences and alleged abridgment of civil rights.

Henry Ridgely had a son, Henry, born October 3, 1669, who married Nicholas Greenberry's daughter, Katherine, in 1689. Their son, Nicholas Greenberry Ridgely, was born on his father's plantation, "Wardridge," near Annapolis, February 12, 1694. In 1711, when he was but seventeen years of age, he married Sarah, a daughter of Colonel John Worthington, by whom he had several daughters. She died March 16, 1721. By the time Nicholas was twenty-seven, he had lost both his young wife and his father. His mother had remarried. Perhaps these bereavements and the change in atmosphere at home impelled him to leave Annapolis. By 1723 he had come to live in the neighborhood of Newcastle, Delaware, where he married in that year, Ann, daughter of Robert French and widow of James Gordon. She lived only ten years thereafter and we have no exact record of his residence during that time, except for a short while when he lived with his motherless daughters at Duck Creek or Salisbury near Smyrna in Kent County, Delaware.

Our knowledge of him becomes more definite after 1735, when he was at Salem, New Jersey, across the Delaware Bay from Newcastle. There he paid his addresses to Mary, daughter of Judge Hugh Middleton, widow of Captain Benjamin Vining and mother of two children: Mary, who married Charles Inglis, and John, afterward Chief Justice of Delaware. Nicholas and Mary were married December 6, 1736, and came to Delaware with their family, including an infant son, Charles Greenberry. They settled in Dover, where they rented the house of one Willcoks that is supposed to have stood on the east side of what was then called the Parade, facing Dover Green. After settling in Delaware, Nicholas took an active part in politics. On May 20, 1735, as Foreman of the Grand Jury, he signed a petition to King

George II against granting a charter to Lord Baltimore in abrogation of the rights of the Penn family in the Three Lower Counties on Delaware. The original of this petition is contained in the Penn manuscript. Soon after his arrival in Delaware and until his death, he was a judge of the Supreme Court of the Three Lower Counties. In 1745, he was selected by the Signer, Caesar Rodney, then a minor, to be his guardian, and his papers show a warm attachment to his ward.

Nicholas bought land west of Dover, the County Seat of Kent, and in 1749 moved to the brick "mansion" he had just built upon it. His wife named this home plantation "Eden Hill." Nicholas, rather ashamed of the sentimental name, explained that she probably named it so because "it had a pleasant sound." Here he lived until his death in 1755. His son by his marriage to Mary Vining was Charles Greenberry, who succeeded his father as owner of Eden Hill, but in 1767 moved into the Parke house on Dover Green, finding it inconvenient to practice medicine from his country home. Dr. Charles Ridgely died in his early middle years and his second wife, Ann Moore, survived him. Ann liked a country life. She had spent her girlhood at "Moore Hall" near Valley Forge and she felt that life at Eden Hill would be agreeable to her. She liked the idea of bringing up her children in the country rather than in the house on the village Green. She closed the town house and the family made Eden Hill their home. In 1803, Ann's eldest son, Henry Moore Ridgely, married Sally Banning and brought his bride to the house on the Green.

At the death of Ann Ridgely, her stepson, Nicholas, the eldest son of his father by his first wife, Mary Wynkoop, came into possession of Eden Hill and made it his home. Nicholas was the second Chancellor of Delaware, succeeding Chancellor Killen in 1801. He married Mary Brereton who survived him many years. Nicholas and Mary were devoted to children but they had none, while the half-brother, Henry Moore Ridgely, and his wife, Sally Banning, filled the house on the Green with a large family. One of these children, Henry, born in 1817, ran away one morning from his many brothers and sisters and arrived at the door of Eden Hill Farm a mile away. When his aunt and uncle greeted him, he announced that he had come because there he wished to live. He was in earnest about it and though a small boy he

managed to carry out his intention. His uncle and aunt were devoted to him and the Chancellor named him his heir after the death of his widow.

After Sally Banning's death, Henry Moore Ridgely married Sally Ann Comegys, who had no children. She survived him many years, dying in 1887 in the old house on the Green. Seven years later it became the home of Henry Ridgely, son of Edward and grandson of Henry Moore Ridgely, who lived there until his death in 1940. It is now his widow's home.

A family tree is included in this volume showing all these lines from the Maryland progenitors and the Moore family of Pennsylvania to recent years, but especial interest is centered in the writers of the letters that follow and the persons to whom they were addressed. Many of these passed from the scene more than a century and a half ago; some lived until the later years of the nineteenth century. A great many of them lie in Christ Churchyard in Dover.

All pass, but both Eden Hill and the Ridgely house on the Green in Dover remain in possession of direct descendants of those Ridgelys who acquired them, lived and died in them, and cared for the fabric of the dwellings and the furnishings they contained. The fact that not a few of the wedding gifts of 1803 can be identified today and that some articles used before the Revolution are still sound as well as beautiful, testifies to the prudent care they have received for five generations.

I have decided on my epitaph. It is brief and I believe it is also truthful: "She died of the Eighteenth Century." Before that happens, I want to share some of my excursions into earlier times with others, and I have made this volume for those who, like me, have an interest in what went on before.

MABEL LLOYD RIDGELY

The Green, Dover,
December, 1948.

What Them Befell

THE RIDGELYS OF DELAWARE
& THEIR CIRCLE

I HAVE said that this volume lays emphasis on intimate affairs of the family and especially the concerns of young people. The earliest correspondence we have of a child in the Ridgely family is that between Charles and his "Honored Father," Nicholas, in the 1750's. It reveals an attitude on the part of a child to a parent which no father today expects or desires. Yet underlying the formal approach of this boy to his father there is a free spirit of independence and an expression of definite personality.

In the child's adult years he became a well-rounded man, a civic-minded citizen and a skilled physician. He was an ardent lover and a devoted husband and father. That he had humor, charm and gaiety as well as a serious attitude to duty we know from anecdotes which the family still remember. Sympathy and tenderness were attributes of his nature.

When Charles arrived at the age when it was desirable to send him away to school, Nicholas chose the Philadelphia Academy, where the boy was placed under the care and direction of the headmaster, David James Dove. His father's first letter to Charles follows.

Dover
October 3, 1751

My dear son.

I rece[ive]d, your Letter by And[rew] Doz and am well pleased to know that you gott well to Phila. and that you are well satisfied with your Situation there, with your Master Mr. Dove, and like the place; and Mr. Dove writes me, that as you appear to be of a Tractable and Obliging Disposition he is in no Doubt but you will do very well in your Learning, and he shall be able to give me a very Satisfactory account of you; and I hope you will Establish his good Opinion of you, by a constant course of Complisant willingness and Diligence; which will not only gain his good Opinion of you but every body else. By which means you will Recommend yourself to the Notice of the Visitors and all other Gentlemen who come to the School. And among the servants in the Family, Behave with Courteousness and not be Crabed or Cross, and by that means, you will have their good

will, and they will be ready to oblige and Serve ye. I understand your Master; Mr. Dove, intends to be Down at Dover about Christmas or sooner, and that you want to come Down with him which I shall be very well pleased with, if you can find any Convenient way of Coming Down, and returning again.

I have herewith sent you by Andrew Doz—Six Spa[ni]sh Dollars—Rowled up in brown Paper, w[hi]ch I hope you will use prudently.

Inclosed is a Letter to John Cally, Shoemaker to furnish you with Shoes when you want; w[hi]ch Letter carry to him. I have herewith (p[e]r Doz) sent you about One Hundred & Twenty Goose Quills (all that I had) but I have a promise of five or six hundred in a few days, & these I'll send by Doz the next Trip.

Herewith is a Letter for Doctor Thomas Bond, to whome I have wrote; to take care of you if you should at any time be sick and want the Help of a doctor, w[hi]ch Letter I would have you carry and deliver to him yourself.

Your Mother & Several of our Family have been sick, but are now all midling Well, but your Sister Rachel & Benny continue still sick; but not very Ill, and Sally Gorrel hath been very ill, lately, but is grown better and Mr. Gorrel is very ailing, your Sister Ruthey, is pretty well, in health but greatly Fateagued. Your Mother Brother and all your Sisters Joyn me in our Mutual love to you and I am

My Dear Son, your Loving Father
NICHOLAS RIDGELY

N B

And[re]w Doz did not buy the joynted baby for Sally)
Gorrel; the money you gave him was not enough.)

[*Addressed to* Mr. Charles Ridgely
at Mr. James Dove's
in Philadelphia]

Dover July 16, 1752

My dear son

I rece[ive]d yours of the 7 Inst[ant] and have n[ow] wrote to Mr. Dove, that you are to be Kept to your Latin, & not be hindered by Cyphering until he thinks it more proper for you to be putt to Cypher. Your Mother

has sent you a bundle by And[re]w Doz, with a Shirt s[om]e worsted, & thread in it; with a Card tied on the Bundle directed to you. Our Familys at home and at the Mill are all in Tolerable good health.

I am, My Dear Son
Your Loving Father
NICHOLAS RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Mr. Charles Ridgely
at Mr. James Dove's
Philadelphia]

Dover August 20th, 1752.

My dear son

I receiv[e]d a letter p[e]r And[re]w Doz from Mr. Dove Dated the 15th. Inst[ant] wherein he expresses much satisfaction at my approving of his advise, of your being kept to your Latin, & not to be taken off, by going to Arithmetic, till some time hence, and gives me great pleasure by letting me Know your Diligence & good Behaviour and writes very affectionately of you, which is a great Satisfaction to your Mother myself & all your Friends to know & see the Improvement you make in your Learning, & your writeing especially. I hope you will Continue in your Dutifull & Obedient behaviour to Mr. Dove and all your Teachers, and the utmost Diligence in your learning, which will render the Pains they take with you (to instruct you) a pleasure; and to you it will prove a Sure satisfaction to see they are pleas[e]d. Your own advantage, as well as a pleasure to me, will be the consequence of your care & Diligence, and with others you will gett reputation, and respect; be sure, avoid all idle mean company, which sort, is a certain bane to youth. Our Familys are all in health, & all give their love to you and Jamey Gorrel. Inclosed I send you Cash Ten Shillings to use as you have Occasion.

And I am, my Dear Child,
Your Loving Father
NICHOLAS RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Mr. Charles Ridgely
at Mr. James Dove's
Philadelphia]

The first letter written by Charles, that we have, is dated:

Philadelphia Nov. 2. N[ew] S[tyle] 1752

Hon[ore]d Sir

I take this Opportunity p[e]r Doz to acquaint you with my Health, as also to inquire after yours which I hope has been pretty good. I understood by Mr. Nixon (whom I saw a few Days ago) that Sister Rachel has been very sick lately; I should have wrote by him but I expected Doz up soon. I hope, hon[ore]d Sir, I shan't trespass upon your Goodness, by a Petition I am going to make; which is, for some Latin Books that I want a good deal; as I am out of the Book I was in sometime ago & advanc'd higher I use now more Books than one for sometimes I get in one, sometimes in another, the Books I want are a Virgil price 7/6 Selectae Profanis 7/6 Quintus Curtius 15/. Please to present my Duty to Mother and my Love to all of my Relations.

I am, Honoured Sir, your ever
Dutiful & loving son,
CHAS. GREEN[BERR]Y RIDGELY

N:B: We are something)
surpriz'd at Jemmy's not)
comeing with Doz as we)
expected.)
CGR

[*Addressed to* Nicholas Ridgely, Esq.
near Dover]

Philad[elphi]a Nov. 18:1752

Most Hon[ore]d Sir

I heard (by Doz) that you and Mother and all the Family were well; for which I return God many Thanks. I was in hopes, I shou'd have got a Letter by Doz; but I suppose you were so busy (it being Court) that you could not write; but I hope you'll send me a Letter next Trip. I go on in such a Manner in my Studies, that I hope, I shall give Satisfaction to you, Mother and all the Family. I shall take care and be as saving as possible; knowing your unbounded Generosity to me, I hope I shan't abuse it; I buy nothing but what is necessary either for my Apparel or Study; as to the

Gun, if you think it improper for me, I've no more to say. Please to present my Duty to Mother and my Love to all my Sisters.

I remain &c.

To N. R. Esq.

[*Although this note is unsigned, Charles' authorship is unmistakable.*]

Philad[elphia] June 21st, 1753

Hon[ore]d Sir,

It was most agreeable News to me, to hear of your good Health, which I did by Doz, tho' I was in Hopes of having it in a Letter from yourself; which would have been very pleasing to me. Jemmy and I are very well at this Time. I should be very thankful for it, if you'd please to give me a Tunick to wear in this hot Weather, (price about 45/) for it is full warm to wear a Cloth-Coat, and it does not look very well to wear jackets; I wanted also 12 or 15 shillings, that I might get the Books bound which were hurt when the Shallop overset; and I want 18 or 20/ worth of Books, which I stand in more immediate Need of than of any Thing else; for tho' the Tunick, and binding my Books are both necessary, yet they are not so absolutely so as the Books, Honoured Sir, which I hope you will be pleased to give me, and thereby acting according to your wonted Kindness, which has hitherto, and always will exact my most grateful Returns of Duty and Love, which I hope will always make a shining Figure in my Character; Jemmy and I give our love to my Sisters; and my Service to all my Friends.

I remain, Honoured Father
Your for-ever affectionate
and Dutiful Son
CHAS. GREEN'Y. RIDGELY

B. Please to desire Mother
to send up my Box with
Pomfret's Poems, Young Man's
Companion and Locke on education,
with the Key of the Box enclosed
in a letter.

[*Addressed to* Nicholas Ridgely, Esq.]

In the letter which follows, Charles described to his father the disagreement between Mr. Dove and the Trustees of the Academy. This was a famous quarrel, and indeed the history of the Philadelphia Academy was rarely without excitement. William Smith, the first Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, made many enemies because of his connection with and preference for the Church of England, and in the days preceding his regime Dove and other headmasters seem to have been frequently at odds with the Trustees. The quarrel of July, 1753, was succeeded by many others equally serious.

Philad[elphi]a July 13th, 1753

Hon[ore]d Sir,

There has happen'd since my last of the eleventh of this Instant, an Accident, which I little expected; 'tis Mr. Dove's leaving the Academy; the Trustees have long insisted upon his complying with some unreasonable Conditions of theirs; but knowing how detrimental such Compliance would be to him, he gave them Notice some Time ago that they must provide themselves with another Master, if they still insisted upon his yielding to their Demands, thereby acting as a sincere, honest Man should do; which Character they seem to have forgot as well as that of Gentlemen; (I speak not of the whole Body of them; but only of a few leading Members) for when they had got a Master, they came immediately without acquainting him with their Intention and put their new Master in his Place; as well forgetting his former Generosity in making known to them his Intention as that Character which they ought to have supported. But he has set up a School of his own, into which he won't admit above 25 or 30 Schollars; and I would fain be one of that number if you pleased; submitting myself; Hon[ore]d Sir, in this as well as other Things to your Determination; for to leave Mr. Dove now he has taken so much Pains to instruct me in the Latin, and otherwise, would be in me a most ungracious Action, and I look upon Ingratitude as the most abhor'ed and hateful of all Crimes; but not to let you know my Desire and Intention would be an infringement on my Duty; on which Side I shall always be very cautious of offending.

Mr. Dove is already pretty sure of 18 or 20 Boys, amongst whom are all the highest in the English School, several of 15 or 16 years old from

the Latin School, and the coming of so many Boys so soon (since he left the School but yesterday) I think is a clear Indication that he has been treated very unworthily. The Trustees now have a Master, who, I believe will, as servilely obey them as they imperiously command him. I once more desire, Dear Sir, that you would let me stay with Mr. Dove, and increase that Debt of Gratitude that is due, from,

Most Hon[ored] father
Your loving & Dutiful son
CHAS. G. RIDGELY

My Duty to my dear Mother,
and love to my Sisters.
CGR

[*Addressed to* Nicholas Ridgely, Esq.]

The correspondence continued:

Dover July the 26th 1753

My dear child

I rec[eive]d your letter of the 13th Instant by Mr. Chew, some Days after I rec[eiv]ed that of the 11th which you had mention'd in your last. I am concern'd that a Difference has happened between Mr. Dove & the Trustees, and of Mr. Dove's leaving the Academy. But as it is so & that Mr. Dove sets up a School of his Own, as you inform me he intends to do; wherein I suppose he will instruct writeing & arithmetick, as well as reading & Latin, I should not have inclin'd to have removed you from him; (if you had not desired to be continued with him) as he had laid the foundation of your learning and instructed you with care & Diligence I think it is just that he should perfect you therein, and the Inclosed Letter to Mr. Dove is to acquaint him therewith that if your Behaviour is agreeable to him, and he is willing to keep you, I shall continue you with him and under his Care, as at first I committed you to him. Inclosed I send you Fifty Shillings Two 20/ and one 10/ Bills for your Tunick &c. Your Mother, myself & Family are all at this time in middling good Health; and so are they also at the Mill, & Mr. Martins.

I am, my dear son,
Your Loving Father
NICHOLAS RIDGELY

Dover August the 18th. 1753

My dear child

Your letter of the 7th. Inst[ant] I rece[ive]d & noticed the contents inclos'd. I've sent you cash Fifty Shillings to pay for Books, & in your former Letter, wherein you acquainted me of Mr. Dove's removal from the Academy, you wrote with much warmth in favour of Mr. Dove, which was just & right, and you hinted Reflectingly on some of the Gentlemen Trustees of the Academy. I omitted in my former letter to caution you not to express or show the least resentment to any of these Gentlemen, but to behave to them respectfully in the same manner and with the same complaisance at all times, as if you were still at the Academy under their Inspection. Your Sister Polly Vining hath been Sick some days with fevers & tooth ach & Polly Martin has the ague & fever, myself your Mother & the rest of our familys are in tolerable health. Give my service to Mr. Dove.

I am my Dear Son your Loving
Father
NICHOLAS RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Mr. Charles Ridgely
at Mr. Dove's in Philadelphia]

Philad[elphi]a Oct. 1st. 1753

Hon[ore]d Sir.

I rec[eive]d your letter, and the things mentioned, for which I return you my most hearty thanks. Jemmy Gorrel and I are now very well, and I think People in general here seem to be pretty healthy. Ships continue to come in very thick; but I have little or no News to let you know, only that there has happen'd on Friday Night last, a most barbarous & cruel Murder, committed on a Boy of about 13 or 14 years old (as I was inform'd) whilst he was asleep by a Servant Man; he was cut & mangled terribly in many Places, after which the Fellow drag'd him to a Little House, into which he threw him, & to sink him, throwed some Bed-Cloathes on him; and it was next morning early discover'd; (for the Child's Parents were at N[ew] York) and he endeavouring to make his escape on a Shallop was taken, and two or three Sailors with him, who, 'tis imagined are accessary; the Wretch is now in Prison, and I doubt not will suffer an exemplary Punishment, which he justly deserves: 'tis supposed they intended to have rob'd the House after having murder'd the Boy; But Heav'n baffled their weak concerted Plot! They say the Child spoke some few words after he

was taken up (which was very early in the morning) and then immediately expired. I shall get my Breeches made as soon as possible, but I want Stockings greatly, and when I'm buying I had better get several Pair at a Time. I also want a Hat, for the one I now have, I have had about 18 Months. I have sent down Mr. Dove's Acc[oun]t of some Books & Paper, I have had of him. I want an Ovid, which will cost 13/6 or 14/ but I can do pretty well without it; but I need a Horace a good deal, the best Sort will cost about 35/1 & the cheapest about 8 or 10/; but I think 'tis much better to buy a good one at once, the Reason that I want a Horace so much is because I am going in it in a Week or two, which is one of the most difficult Latin Books that is read at School. I wish, Sir, you would let me know whether you intend to take me from School next Spring, not that I am anyways tired of it, but I hope by then to be well acquainted with the Latin Tongue, and I am also conscious what a great expense I am to you the best of Fathers. Please to present my love to my Brothers & Sisters,

I am, most hon[ore]d Father,
Your dutiful & loving son
CHAS. G. RIDGELY

The next letter refers to the death of Rachel Ridgely, wife of John Vining, and half-sister of Charles Ridgely.

Phila[delphia] Nov. 20th, 1753

Dear Father

I rec[eive]d your Letter together with the melancholy and unhappy News, of the Decease of my dear, my lov'd, sister. Nature overcome and harrass'd out with Sickness yield'd at length to the unavoidable. . . . Unhappy Benny and Nicky; and doubly so, inasmuch as they are as yet unacquainted with the Greatness and Nature of the Loss they have sustain'd. And must I never more enjoy Company of one so dear to me? O! No! Alas! that short Interval of Ease which she enjoy'd (for I can't call it Health) and which I hop'd was the forerunner of a thorough Recovery, makes the blow strike the deeper: (pardon my emotions 'tis the Effect of Sorrow, and no more than my Duty requires to the Memory of that excellent Person!) But I solace myself with the pleasing Reflection, that it was struck by an alwise and divine Hand, who knows best what is for the Good of his Crea-

tures. Edmund Windor could not get the Butter ready against last Trip so that I did not send it, but he has got as much as he could, which is 53. lb. and it cost 7d. p[e]r Pound, as p[e]r acc[oun]t but he assures me 'tis good, and I send it down herewith—You sent rather too late, and it has also been a bad Summer for Butter, and consequently 'tis both dear and Scarce. Please to present humble Duty and hearty Love where due.

I am, most hon[ore]d Sir,
Your ever affectionate and
dutiful son
CHAS. GREEN[BERR]Y RIDGELY

The purchase of butter in large quantities when refrigeration was unknown seems curious, but we find in one of the family letters a description of the way it was preserved. Small quantities were wrapped in the inner husks of corn, which wrapping was made fast. These parcels were placed in crocks, in a brine strong enough to float an egg, and saltpetre was added.

I have said that Nicholas' third wife, Mary Vining, was the mother of his only son, Charles Greenbury Ridgely. The only letter we have from her to Charles is dated December 4th, 1753. In this she expresses great anxiety in regard to "jumps" which she had ordered from Philadelphia, and which had been delayed in coming. "Jumps" were a form of corset or girdle. In the chilly corridors in a house heated only with open fires they were probably very comforting in winter. It was already growing late, on December 4th, for any assurance that the shallop could get through, because ice was probably already forming in the bay. Let us hope that the lady's need was filled before the shallop was beached for the winter.

Dover December the 4th 1753

My dear childe

I have sent you p[e]r Doz three Ruffled Shirts and a pair of very fine yarn stockings for your Self and 2 Shirts for James his mama gave them to me to send him, my Dear Charley if my Jumps be don Mr. Doz will pay for them and bring them Down this Trip, if not I shant gett them this winter and they will be of no Service to me for I want them for the Cold

weather; your sister Gorrell Lies very Sicke and we think her in some Deep decay the Rest of your Brother's family are Pretty well at this time, Polly Vining is very unwel but is gon to Miss Rute [Ruthy] I would have you write her a Letter for She thinks it hard you Dont as she is so very Porly in health for she have never Bin one Day well since Last September nor I Know not when she will. We have 2 of Ben Warfield's children a Son and a Daughter and Cozen Betsey Ridgely.

Nancy Warfield has had fitts Last week. Your Dear Sister has left me the care of her Dear babes, but they are with their Papa yet, by all the above you will be able to gess at the State of our family at this time. My Dear Child I have nothing more to add at this time but my Harty prayers to All Mighty God for your health and wellfair from your most Affectionate Mother.

MARY RIDGELY

If you can spair the money by me a
scrubing brush and hair brush.
Salle and Bettse give their love to
you. M. R.

In the letter of February 19th, 1754, Charles mentions that he is sending a letter by Mr. Samuel Chew, who is going as far as New Castle and perhaps farther. Samuel Chew lived on a plantation close to Dover, and was a brother of Benjamin Chew of Germantown. We learn from other letters that he was a frequent visitor at Eden Hill and often carried messages to Philadelphia for his neighbors.

Philad[elphi]a Feb. 19th 1754

Hon[ore]d Sir.

I hope you have received my Letter, p[e]r Mr. Doz as its Miscarriage would give me some Concern. As Mr. Sam[ue]l Chew, is going as far as New Castle, perhaps farther, I thought I could not meet with a better Opportunity of writing, wherefore I embrace this, to let you know that I am at present in good Health, as I earnestly pray God this may find you and my hon'd mother with all my other Dear Relations. I hope my good Cousins will stay with you 'till I go Home, and it would give me great Pleasure to see them. I hope this may find my dear Sister Ruthy on the Recovery, than which, no News can be more welcome to me. I shall want a Pair of Breeches

in the Spring, and there are two sorts of Stuff now commonly worn. Knit breeches, which come in patterns, . . . and I can get a pair of them for about 30/ and which will wear well, and Shagg, a pair of which would cost about 50/ but their goodness in wearing more than compensate for their Difference in Price; but I leave it entirely to your good Pleasure, whether I shall have any or no; I wanted also about 12 or 15/to get some old Cloathes mended. Please to present my humble Duty to my Mother, and Love to my Brother, Sisters, Cousins, &c.

I am &c.
CHAS. G. RIDGELY

Philad[elphi]a March 4th 1754

Dear Father

I rec[eive]d your letter of the 23d. ult[imo] p[e]r Doz, and the Money you mentioned, for which I return you my humble Thanks, it coming very opportunely to my Assistance. I am very well, (thank God) but it troubles me a great deal to hear that my dear Sister lies in so deplorable a Condition; and I should be very glad to see her. I shall use all possible Diligence in enquiring for a Negroe, and if I can hear of one that will suit, will immediately let you know it. Mr. Dove says it will be time enough to send up my Schooling Money with the other; and he has got a Latin and French Horace in 10 Volumes, which he will let me have for 50/ which is very cheap, as they are very fine Books; but then I don't know that I have any absolute Occasion for them; and as I know I am a very great Expense to you already, and I wouldn't presume too much on your Goodness. I shall go Home this Spring, I suppose, Sir, for to stay, and I should be glad if you would let me know what Time, that I might be prepared; and I suppose you don't intend that I shall tarry longer than this Quarter, which is now near up; I have a good Desire to ride Home if it would not put you to too much Trouble and Inconveniency, which I would not do upon any account. I hope I shall in a little Time, get a good Insight in the French Language. Your Kindness has put it out of my Power of desiring anything farther than what I wrote for by Mr. Chew. Please to send up my Box by Mr. Doz. I have been trying for the Cherry-Trees, as you directed, but as yet to no purpose, but you may send by the next Tripp for some, if you please, for I am resolved to get some, if there are any to be had about Phila-

delphia; the price is a Shilling each; neither could I get any Apricots, but I have sent you a Couple of Filbert and you may have as many Apple trees, as you please, and of ev'ry sort almost, at a Shilling apiece. I also send you some graffs of a very fine sort of cherry-tree, of which could get no cyons; and you may spare Brother some, if you please.

Dover March the 25th 1754

My dear child

I rece[ive]d your letters of the 20 Feb'y last p[e]r Samy. Chew & of ye 5th inst[an]t March p[e]r Lock, Shallopman. This may acquaint you of the Melancholy state Our Family have for a long time been, and stil is in for the Deaths of your Two Dear Sisters; Poor Ruthey lay ill close confin'd to her bed & watched with Day and Night from the first Day of December till Sunday the 10th day of this Inst[an]t when at three Quarters after Eight of the Clock in the Morning she expir'd in a Stil easy, composed & resign'd manner retaining her senses perfect & her speech to her very last Expiring breaths; she in very Tender & Affectionate terms desir'd in love to be remember'd to you & Jemmy; and hath, I hope changed this worlds troublesome, for a happy State, in Eternity.

I've rec[eive]d the two Filbords, but have not got the Cherry Grafts you mention. I don't want any young Trees this Season. I shall be well pleased if you will come Immediately, or as soon as you can gett Ready, down to see us. Your Cuzen Eliza[beth] would willingly See you, and she is to go away in a Short time. I can't by any means contrive to Send you a Horse, and it will be very Expensive to Hyre a Horse for so long a time as you must necessarily keep him; I am perfectly willing you should come down by land if you could gett a Horse & Saddle on any Moderate Terms: if your time is not fully up you may return again soon & Compleat it; bring with you Mr. Doves Acc[oun]t for what I owe him that I send him the Money by your return. I want an Iron Chimney Back, very large, the Palatine Stove Plates are the best sort of any for that Purpose. Enquire among these People for one & if you find one to be sold bring me down the Price & Size of it, the biggest you can meet with.

When you come down I can talk with you about your next employment; Inclos'd I send you Three Pounds in Six Ten Shill[in]gs Bills to travel with if you come by Land, or other uses &c. the kee of your Box is here inclos'd,

& the Box comes by John Lock, Shallopman, by whome I send this Letter. Our Familys are in Tolerable Health, and all want to see you. You can let me know when you come down if you know of any Negro man to be sold.

I am my Dear Child your Affectionate
Father,
NICHOLAS RIDGELY

This letter was not received by Charles until after he had dispatched a letter to his father the 29th of March.

Philadelphia, March 29, 1754

Hon[ore]d Sir.

I have been inform'd of the Decease of my dear Sister; which to me is a mournful Occasion for Grief; but expected no less, from the Accounts you were pleased to transmitt me of her Illness. I was in hopes of getting a Letter from you, but Mr. Doz tells me that he set off before the time he had prefixed by which means he deceiv'd you. I hope you have got mine by Lock, before this Time. I want the Things I wrote to you for, very much; I owe the Shoemaker about 20/ and I would get a pair of Boots, if you thought proper; I want some Money also for sundry Occasions. Please to let me know, Sir, when you intend I shall travel Homewards which I would do by Land if you thought fit; and give my Duty and Love where due.

I am, dear Sir,
Your most loving & dutiful son
CHAS. G. RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Nicholas Ridgely, Esq.]

About this time Charles Ridgely completed his work with David James Dove and returned to Dover.

Soon after he left Mr. Dove's school, he received a farewell note from his schoolmaster.

Philad[elphi]a April 15, 1754

Dear Charly:

As you are now setting out in the World it greatly concerns you to con-

sider maturely, what Course you are to steer, before you embark. Hercules, You know, as Tully relates it from Xenophon, when a Youth retired into a Solitude, and there sat contemplating a great while which way he should chuse, either that of Pleasure, or that of Virtue; and at length resolved upon and strenuously pursued the latter. The Story is elegantly dressed, I think by our English Poet, Spenser, and quoted in The Preceptor, to which I refer you, and beg you will peruse it so often till every Sentiment of it be engraven on the Table of your Heart. I pray God to direct you in all your Ways, make you Prosperous in this World and happy in the next, and I am, Dear Charly,

Your ever affectionate Friend and Serv[ant]
DAVID JAMES DOVE

P.S. I expect my Books from London by the return of Budden.
Let me hear from you very often, and inform me w[ha]t Mr. Vining would have me do with Jemmy.

[*Addressed to* Mr. Charles Ridgely]

The boy referred to was Jemmy Gorrell, a step-son of Ruth Ridgely, Charles' half-sister, who had died in the previous March. Mr. Vining had, no doubt, been appointed guardian of the child. John Vining, Chief Justice of Delaware, was a son of Nicholas Ridgely's wife and of her first husband, Benjamin Vining.

David James Dove's letter was received by Charles while he was at Eden Hill Farm with his parents. We believe he remained there through the summer or the greater part of it, and then returned to Philadelphia to study medicine. He was apprenticed by his father to a distinguished physician of that city, Phineas Bond. His father, Nicholas, arranged for his fees and the details of his work, but as he died before the apprenticeship had expired, he left provision in his will for the completion of Charles' studies.

Charles wrote his father after his return to Philadelphia as follows:

November 5, 1754

Hon[ore]d Sir;

As nothing could give me more Concern than your Sickness, so nothing will give me so much Pleasure as the News of your Recovery. I was very unwell when Brother was here, but I am perfectly recover'd, as I pray God you may be before this reaches you. I hope you have considered what I wrote in my last, and will answer it fully by the first Opportunity, as it is an Affair that may concern me pretty much. The cold Weather comes on apace, and I find a thick Coat becomes very necessary, especially as I shall be obliged to go out pretty often this Winter; and I shall want a Jacket too, and one made of Green Nap, or any such Thing, will do as well as any; for I have a thick Jacket, but 'tis much too good to wear every Day. If you intend to send here for your Winter's butter, it will be high Time by when Doz returns. Please to let me know how the Trial went with the Negro you had in Jail. My Humble Duty to my Hon[ore]d Mother (a Tender of which I pray you to accept from me) and Love to my Sisters.

I am, your most dutiful
and Affectionate Son
CHAS. RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Nicholas Ridgely Esq;
These]

Philadelphia, November 15, 1754

Hon[ore]d Sir,

I should not have wrote this Letter, were I not, in hopes, that my frequent writing, would be the Occasion of your often answering me, and the oftener you do, the greater Pleasure it will give me.

I hope it is healthier with you than it is here; for it is very sickly, and there is a Fever now about which some Doctors call Jail Fever, but it is undoubtedly a Species of the Yellow Fever which has increased prodigiously within these ten Days, and Abundance of People die of it; amongst others it has prov'd mortal to three Captains who were in the Dutch Trade. The Weather has been very warm for the Season, and that, I imagine, is the Occasion of its raging so violently.

My Duty and Love where due,

I am, y[ou]r most dut[iful] & aff[ectionate] Son
CHAS. RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Nicholas Ridgely, Esq.]

Philadelphia, November 26, 1754

Hon[ore]d Sir,

I rec[eive]d your Letter the 21st. of this Instant; and you could not have given me greater Pleasure than by informing me that you were mending unless, that you had completely recovered. I hope both you and my Sister are entirely well before this Time. I think Dr. Well's spoke very absurdly in saying that Polly's Stomach was turn'd, (upside down I suppose he meant) which is almost an Impossibility, and if it could be done, I imagine it must be attended with immediate Death. Dr. Anderson seems to speak much more reasonably. He speaks not only my own Sentiments, but those also, of Persons of Skill and Judgment. I rec[eive]d the Money you mentioned for which I return you my most humble & hearty Thanks. Doc[to]r Bond has said Nothing as yet to me about my being bound, and perhaps will not. I believe you are mistaken, in Relation to the Acc[oun]t for it was not inclos'd in the Letter that I saw. Please to present my humble Duty and kind Love, where due.

And be assur'd, that I shall ever remain,
Your most dutiful, and
Affectionate Son
CHARLES RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Nicholas Ridgely, Esq.]

Philad[elphi]a Decem[be]r 1st. 1754

Hon[ore]d Sir:

I am at present in a very good State of Health, as I hope this will find you all. My Brother has at your House an old Desk in the Garret which wants a Frame, Feet, and which he has no Occasion for, if you would get it of him, and send it up to me, I could get fitted up for a Trifle and it would be vastly serviceable to me. Mr. Willing, died Yesterday of the Palatine Fever, tho' I think its Violence decreases every Day, and I am in hopes the Cold Weather will effectually stop it. My Duty to my mother, and Love to my sister &c.

I am, your
Dutiful & affec[tionate] Son,
CHAS. RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Nicholas Ridgely, Esq.
near Dover]

Philadelphia, Decem[ber] 30, 1754

Hon[ore]d Sir,

I this day received your Letter by Mr. Chew, and it gives me great Satisfaction to hear you are pretty well recover'd; I at present enjoy perfect Health (thank God.) I have had good Reason to believe Mr. Vinings Wedding was not far off. I rec[eive]d the Money and acc[oun]t and Thereby return the latter) for which I humbly thank you. You'll be best able to judge whether or no the Desk is worth sending. I am in hopes we are in a great Measure freed from the Palatine Fever which has raged so violently for sometime, for I know of No body that has it at present. There came to Town some Days ago, several Deserters from the French, who report that a Party of Indians had march'd as far as Carlisle in Cumberland County, in the back Parts of this Province and done some Damage, how much we cannot say. Please to give my Duty to my hon[ore]d Mother and Love to my Sisters, I remain

Your most dutiful
and affectionate son
CHARLES RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Nicholas Ridgely, Esq.
near Dover]

Nicholas Ridgely died at his home plantation in February, 1755. Charles Ridgely remained with his preceptor, Dr. Bond, until 1758, when he returned to Dover, prepared to practice his profession of medicine. In June, 1761, he married Mary Wynkoop, a sister of Benjamin Wynkoop, a prosperous merchant and devoted churchman of Philadelphia. The marriage took place at Appoquinimink Church, now known as Old St. Anne's, near Middletown, Delaware. Following the death of his mother in December, 1761, he succeeded to the ownership of Eden Hill Farm.

Charles soon found it inconvenient to practice from the farm although the house was but a mile away from the center of town. In March, 1767, he moved into the old Parke dwelling, a property that he bought a little later from Thomas Parke's estate. It has been occupied by his descendants to this day.

The old house had been built in 1728 on the north side of the Green, a square laid out by order of William Penn. Close by were the law offices and County House where the courts were held. The Green be-

came the favorite location for dwellings in Revolutionary times and for a hundred years later.

Near the King's Road on the south side of the Green was the King George Tavern. A painting of his Majesty swung out in front. At the beginning of the Revolution this picture was painted over by a local artist and General George Washington's portrait was substituted for that of the King. For many years, the portrait of the King could be seen through the fading picture of the General. French Battell kept tavern where now is the Parke building on the north side of the Green, west of the Ridgely House. He was the powderer of wigs to the Assembly for several sessions.

In his house on the Green, Charles Ridgely lived for eighteen years. He became active in political life. He was County Treasurer, 1769 to 1779. Some of his account books are preserved. In 1765 he was elected to the Assembly and continued to serve in most sessions until almost the end of his life. In October, 1767, he urged the passage of a bill "to prohibit the importation of slaves into this government." This measure, however, was killed in the Assembly. He was a member of the Convention that framed the Constitution of 1776. During the period of unrest before the Revolution, he was Chairman of the Kent County Committee of Correspondence.

A letter he wrote in this capacity to the Committee of Correspondence of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia bears evidence of the growing tensions of the spring of 1775, as well as to the close coöperation that existed between the Committees in different localities.

[*To* Messrs. Joseph Read or Thomas Mifflin
for the Committee of Correspondence
for the City and Liberties of
Philadelphia
The Post]

Gentlemen,

Your letter of the 21st February last is now before us; and we thank you for the pains you have taken to discover the Author of the Letter from which the Extract published in the Pennsylvania Ledger of 11th Feb. ult[im]o was taken; which though ineffectual, will tend to deter inconsiderate People from putting off their crude and ill formed Opinions upon

the World as serious Truths. Indeed it is to be expected in a free Government like ours, where all men have been used to think and to speak what they please, that even the exploded Doctrines of passive Obedience and non resistance, absurd as they are, may meet with some Advocates. But we think we can with great Confidence say, the People here are animated with a noble zeal in the general Cause, nor can we without feeling the warmest Indignation bear to think of any Attempt to deprive us of our just Rights and Privileges. We love and venerate the happy and free Constitution under which we were born and have lived; and we hold sacred the Liberty of the Press, as one of its main Supports; which has ever been most cherished at those Periods that public Liberty was most valued, and the personal Safety of the Subject was most the Object of Attention to the legislative and executive Powers. In this Channel has general Knowledge and the Love of Liberty been disseminated through the British Empire. Our Forefathers protected the Press with a jealous Eye; considering every Attack upon it a Prelude to an Attack upon the Constitution. We who are, or hope we are, animated with the same generous Sentiments, should be sorry to see the Press shut to fair political Discussion. We think the great and glorious Cause which engages the present Attention of all America, cannot suffer by it. Besides, we look upon it as the indubitable Right of every English Subject, to deliver his opinion to the Public upon every constitutional Question. When this ceases to be the case, Liberty will be but a Name; Freedom an empty Phantom.

This part of our Letter is in answer to a Letter from Mr. Jabez Maud Fisher to our Chairman, dated 21st Feb. and received by him on the 25th, (a Copy whereof we send you); in which he puts much stress on the Freedom of the Press; But we apprehend on this occasion *that* Liberty has been abused. We would observe that if the Author of the Letter is not capable of "Calumny and Falsehood" (as he asserts) the Committees of Correspondence and Inspection for Kent County, have been guilty of both.

We are, Gentlemen, with great Respect,

Your most obedient humble Servants
Signed by order of the Committee of Correspondence
CHARLES RIDGELY, Chairman

2 March 1775
Dover, Kent County
on Delaware

It will be seen that Charles was deeply engaged with questions of the day, as well as with his profession of medicine.

Meanwhile, his domestic happiness was increased by the birth of his sons: Nicholas, the eldest, born in 1762; Charles, Jr.; Abraham, namesake of his mother's father; and John, who died as a child. Charles and Mary (Wynkoop) were most happily mated and the husband's grief was very real when his wife died in November, 1772, in giving birth to a daughter. She and the child were buried in Old Christ Churchyard in Dover.

At about the time that Charles Ridgely finished his education in Philadelphia, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in London, sent Charles Inglis to be missionary to Dover and adjacent parishes. In 1764 he married Mary Vining, Charles Ridgely's half-sister, who lived less than a year after the marriage. Charles Inglis wrote to the Bishop of London asking that he be transferred to another charge. In November, 1765, he was appointed to be Rector of Trinity Church, at the head of Wall Street, New York City.

Charles Inglis and Charles Ridgely were devoted friends and sustained an active correspondence. There are many references in their letters to the state of the mission churches in the Lower Delaware Counties and to the political unrest in New York following the taxation acts of Great Britain.

After the death of Mary Ridgely, Charles Inglis' letters gave her bereaved husband great consolation. His condition he felt to be desperate. Mary had been an understanding and devoted companion, a careful housewife, and an untiring mother. Charles found the house difficult to manage, and no one suitable could be found to take care of the little boys. He explained his perplexities and desolate condition to his friend and brother-in-law, Charles Inglis, in the letters of 1772-1774.

Dover, 22 Decem[be]r, 1772

My dear Sir,

I just now received your Letter of the 7th instant, which indeed was truly acceptable; as it contained Sentiments most agreeable and flattering to me; especially under my present State of Mind and Observations founded on good Sense and Faith. You say justly, Philosophy and Religion

are in vain summon'd to assuage Grief swell'd to its highest Pitch. Nature must have her Course—she must relieve herself her own way; but when she has pretty well discharged the Load of passion, when anguish has in some measure consumed itself, then Reason and Religion may be used with effect, to most excellent Purposes. But how far off that Period is for me, I cannot say, for as yet no Day has passed in which my beloved Friend and sweet Companion has been unwept by me. You perhaps will condemn this, call it unmanly, perhaps say 'tis impious. I condemn it myself: Books, Business, Company, at times afford me some Relief. But the Night, & Solitude, bring back the dear Ideas of past Happiness—ten thousand Instances of the Love and tenderness of my dear partner, instantly recur, and my Soul is overwhelmed with sorrow. But in all this I am selfish, being fully assured from the Goodness of her Life, and sweet Composure with which she ended it, that she had made a most happy Exchange. Perhaps she was removed this early to reward her Virtues; and perhaps to increase mine; at least I hope it will have that Consequence; nothing could so fully have convinced me of the little Value of human Enjoyment. Like the foolish Miser in Scripture, I had counted upon many Years of Joys to come, when the all wise Disposer of Events at one Stroke put an end to all my Expectations of that kind. Yet I feel great Consolation in the Hope, that we may hereafter meet never more to part—and whether the Sentiment be consonant to Scripture & Reason or not, that departed Spirits recognize each other in the Realms of Bliss, that their Breasts glow with fervent Love, I feel so much pleasure in the Thought, and it is such a Gratification to me, that I must indulge it. But I do it the more freely, because it perfectly coincides with my Reason, and my Opinion of celestial Happiness, which Opinion I think is supported everywhere in Scripture, and although the Almighty has many ways to make his Creatures happy; yet to me none seem so obvious as those resulting from a pure, animated, intellectual Union, founded on Love, forever obliging and obliged. Nor does it appear to me improper to suppose that the same passions which well regulated are here productive of Happiness, shall, when our Souls are freed from this Load of Clay, being refined and adapted to our then State, thereafter be the chief Source of heavenly Joys, for I have little doubt that they originate from the Soul; tho' in this life their influence seems to be on the body; otherwise I cannot see the propriety of future punishments for the crimi-

nal Indulgence of any passion—but I am going too far into a subject that I am not well enough acquainted with—for me it suffices that the Sentiment appears quite innnocent, and tends to make me happier and more virtuous.

I know not whether in the distress & confusion of mind under which I before wrote to you I mentioned that my dear Companion left me a little Daughter, her last pledge of Love. However, it has pleas'd God to remove her also; after languishing from her Birth and strugling with a dreadful Disease; this day put a period to her Life, a Loss I might probably have felt severely at another time, but now I have no Grief to bestow on her, poor Babe; her mother engrosses it all. However, it seems to remind me of the Truth of an Observation of Mr. Youngs' "Woes cluster Woes; rare are solitary Woes." My dear Sir, accept my hearty thanks for your Letter, which is much more agreeable than anything I have long met with, and afforded me more Consolation and is still more pleasing in coming so timely.

I am,
Your much obliged
and affectionate Friend
CHARLES RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* the Rev. Mr. Charles Inglis
at New York.]

Dover 27 Decemb[e]r 1772

Dear Sir,

As no Opportunity has offered of sending my Letter of the 26th I shall trouble you with another at the same time. And I cannot but thank you most heartily and sincerely, for the part you take in my distress; tho' indeed it is no more than I expected from your Friendship; your even thinking of visiting me on the occasion affords me pleasure; as it is a proof of the place you give me in your affection; which I always wish to preserve. But notwithstanding I had rather see you under my present Circumstances, than any person whatever, yet I cou[l]d not admit of your gratifying me at so much Risque and Fatigue to yourself. But I must impose another Task on you, I wish to have an Epitaph for my Beloved, expressive of her Virtues, and my Affection; you would oblige me much by furnishing me with one

as soon as you can; I have essayed one, but it does not please me by any means. On these occasions 'tis more injurious to the memory of the Deceas'd to say too much than too little; I wish to hit the happy mean; and shall wait with impatience for your Copy.

Since I wrote my other Letter, in turning over Addisons Evidences of the Christian Religion, I perceive he powerfully supports the Sentiment you express, that the Spirits of the blessed renew their Friendship. His reasoning gave me much Satisfaction; yet some things relative to it I cou[l]d wish to understand more fully. Some Men who seem eminently to have possess'd the Favours of Heaven, especially Abraham, after passing a long Life in happiness with Sarah, upon her decease married again. The Presumption is that he, and both his wives, were rewarded with everlasting Felicity. Now with which of his wives did he enter into friendly Union. Or do our Faculties, our Affections enlarge, so that he could form the Connexion with both? If so, yet another difficulty occurs; it often happens that one Man has several wives, that some of these wives have several Husbands; the whole may be happy hereafter; how shall the Union be form'd? I well remember the Question of the Woman and her seven Husbands answered by our Saviour, but the Querist there seem'd to suppose a Union of Sex in Paradise, which I do not. But I suppose the Union has a pure friendship for its Basis; seeking continual Opportunities of obliging the Object of its Love. But can this Love be so diffusive as to be directed to several Objects, and yet be equally animated and fervent to all? This tender passion we suppose originates in this World. I believe no one will hesitate to pronounce, that here our Affections are not sufficiently enlarg'd to include several Objects, at least with respect to the Fair Sex; laying aside the Idea of Sex, and confining it to Friendship only: At least I can from experience say, that I had a friendship of a delicate, fervent, peculiar kind, to my dear Companion, independent of every Idea of sexual Gratification, which I never felt towards any other person. Perhaps this came from a Contemplation of her Virtues, from Gratitude for innumerable Instances of Tenderness, from my frequent use of considering her in the endearing light of the Mother of my Children; of my own best Friend, who was to share with me every good Gift of human Life; from pity to her Sex, subjected to Burthens myself was exempted from. However, be the cause what it will, I am sure the fact was so.

For the present I will stop, and shall expect with impatience a long Letter from you, which will much oblige, Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate Friend,
CHARLES RIDGELY

Rev. Mr. Inglis

NB My little girl is interr'd in the same Grave with her belov'd and virtuous Parent: Perhaps you may think it necessary to mention this Circumstance in the Epitaph: in that follow your own opinion.

[*Addressed to* the Rev. Mr. Charles Inglis
New York]

About this time Charles wrote a tribute to his wife which expresses his devotion to her and his appreciation of her "amiable qualities."

"And Mary, wife of the aforesaid Charles Ridgely, departed this life on Monday, 23d November 1772, aged twenty-seven years and twelve days, having been born November 1st, 1745. (O.S.)

"This excellent woman, was beautiful in her person, and of most engaging manners. By the Father she was descended from a very respectable family; by the Mother, she was a lineal Descendant from the Dyer family, famous in New England for their religious zeal and misfortunes: Her amiable Qualities secured to her unalterably the Affection of her Husband; to whom she was in all things, one of the best of wives. She was uncommonly attentive in forming the manners of her Children upon the principles of Religion and Virtue. To her Servants she was mild, gentle and humane; urging no command harshly. In her general Behaviour she was affable, polite and complaisant; and there was in it a certain meekness and sweetness that wonderfully attracted the Esteem of all who conversed with her. Her rank and character she supported with Grace and Dignity, without ostentation. In her whole Conduct she displayed an uncommon prudence and moderation. In her conversation she was rather reserved; and remarkably modest and decent in her Expressions: Nothing fell from her chaste Lips to wound the most delicate Ear. Nothing to displease the most exquisite Sensibility. Mindful of her own concerns and the sweets of domestic Happiness, she sought not pleasure in the Haunts of Idleness and

Disipation: Tho' she condemned not in others any innocent amusement. Exact in discharging the duties of Religion, she allowed nothing to break in upon them, but the most unavoidable necessity: on this Basis were founded the good qualities of this accomplished Woman. This enabled her to bear a succession of painful Disorders with heroic Constancy; and to meet Death with Firmness and Intrepidity; and this we believe and trust have secured to her a Crown of Glory which will last, when time shall be no more: as her lovely Countenance was unclouded with a Frown in Life, so in Death it fell into a pleasing Smile."

Mary Wynkoop died in November, 1772. Charles Willson Peale made a portrait of her dated 1773. Perhaps her husband's letter describing her personality was composed to assist the artist in his interpretation. The portrait and the writing seem to belong the one to the other.

To resume the Inglis-Ridgely correspondence eighteen months later:

Dover 21 May 1774

Dear Sir,

Your favour of the 4th instant is just come to hand, through which there runs a Glow of Friendship exceeding grateful to me. Though it but proceeds on the same plan of your preceding Letters, which all bear the same friendly Spirit.

Give me leave to take the present opportunity of congratulating you and Mrs. Inglis on the birth of your Son: Who, if my good wishes are answered will live to be useful to his Country, to be happy himself and to repay in filial Love & Duty, his parents, for all their attention to, and care of him.

At the time of writing my former Letter, and afterwards, I was exceedingly distressed; scarce a day past in which I did not pay a Tribute of Tears to the Memory of one of the most amiable and worthiest of wives & of women! This was yet heightened by the lonliness of my Situation: I seem'd forgot & neglected, by all with whom I was connected by Blood or Marriage, except two or three; who were at a great distance: My business call'd me much out: My domestic Affairs were running into Confusion:

but my Health suffered most—the long continued & perhaps too much indulged Distress, debilitated both mind and Body. My Housekeepers, who knew their own Importance, several times left me very abruptly. To Mrs. Wynkoop I had repeatedly and earnestly applied to live with me & to take on her the Care of my sons, with an Assurance that I would use every means to make her Life happy; & that I would not marry on that Condition, but all was in vain; I have never even been able to prevail on her to visit me. Under these Circumstances, considering what convenience & duty both required, I determined again to marry. I visited, approved of, and addressed a Lady, whose good Sense, Virtues and agreeable Manners, will, I flatter myself be a Blessing to myself & my Sons—to her I am to be married the 2d of June next. I need not go into her Character as you personally know Miss Nancy Moore of Moore Hall. Thus I have found (what I wish'd for) that this new attachment, while it buoys me up with hopes of future Felicity, has relieved me of the extreme load of Misery I was oppressed with & restored my mind & body to their usual Health. But till I cease to live, I shall not cease to think of, with the most profound Respect, the most heartfelt & grateful Love, the excellent & accomplished Woman, who has left me so many tender pledges to remember her by, & to revere her for.

Considering your Engagements, I know tis very idle to mention it; and yet as it is really the Truth I cannot avoid telling you, that there is not the Man breathing whose Company would be more acceptable to me at Moore Hall on the 2d of June, than yours, and afterwards at Dover.

Nickey Ridgely is reading Latin, my other boys English; they are all really promising—but don't all parents think so of their children? God grant my hopes of them may be fulfilled!

Y[ou]rs Aff[ectionately]
C.R.

In June, 1774, Charles Ridgely married Nancy Moore, a daughter of Judge William Moore of Moore Hall, near Valley Forge and Radnor. The lady faced a difficult situation. She left behind the refinements of Philadelphia to take up life in a rural community. She had been brought up in an atmosphere of culture and some elegance, though in a family that did not tolerate idleness or extravagance. Her

parents were people of good sense and education. She left a large mansion where she had few responsibilities to manage the small house on Dover Green. Four growing boys awaited her care and as time went on she became the mother of five children of her own. The old house was added to by Charles until it was doubled in capacity, and here the family lived until Charles' untimely death in 1785.

Between the dates 1774-1784 very few letters survived. One is included dated March 30, 1779. It is from Williamina Moore, wife of Phineas Bond. This letter expresses Mrs. Bond's regard for her son-in-law, General Cadwalader. As the Bonds were British sympathizers and their son an exile in England, while the General was a vehement champion of Washington, her broadmindedness is noteworthy.

Philadelphia March 30, 1779

My d[ea]r Sister,

The enclosed will Best answer your inquiry in regard to the Bond, Mr. Hamilton ought to have wrote to d[ea]r Doctor Ridgely before. I leave him to make his apologies—This Fortnight Willy and Becky left me. I have had a Long Letter from the Former since she got Home. She is delighted with her situation. The only alloy to her happiness is its distance from me. This I wish her to get over. All that I have left me to pray for is peace, her prospects of happiness pleasing as they may now appear depend much on this Favorite wish. I most sincerely Love her husband and believe him to be as Good a man as Lives, and one that has acted from principle. I wish there were more of his character. Shall I see Dr Ridgely and you this spring and as many of your Children as you can bring. I have heard but once from my son since he arrived in England, how Hard has been my lot in being separated from him perhaps forever as to this life, this subject I will not dwell on. Remember me most affectionately to d[ea]r Doc[to]r Ridgely. Tell him I remember with Gratitude his kind attention to the interests of my Children. He is the person Phinny Bond desired me to apply to for advice in my affairs if I should have occasion. This is a liberty I shall take if I find it necessary. As to my Mare she must be troublesome and expensive. Do as you think proper in this affair. What is the price of salt provision amongst you or rather is any to be purchased. My Little Girls join in their Duty and Love.

I am my d[ea]r Nancy your most affectionately

WILLIAMINA BOND

You must make allowances
for a person that seldom
takes a pen in hand unless to
sign her name. Kiss the Dear Children.

The oldest of Charles' children was Nicholas, afterward Chancellor of Delaware, who was sent to Cambridge, Maryland, to read law and prepare himself for the Bar under Robert Goldsborough. On March 17, 1784, he wrote from Cambridge to his stepmother:

Hon[ore]d Madam,

I embrace this first opportunity of congratulating you on the birth of another daughter, and I hope by this time, on your recovery. I suppose now Master George must give place to Miss Nancy, and be esteemed in the second degree as he is not now the youngest. I like the name you have given her very much—that is among the number of those that are very pretty without being at all romantic. Indeed all the girls names are in my opinion so very pretty that I scarcely know which to give the preference to; however, I think I am a little partial to Miss Polly's. I suppose Ann was my father's choice.

By the return of the bearer you must write to me and give me a very minute Account of my youngest Sister, and not sum up the whole with saying that she is the finest child that was ever born, except four others. You know who I mean. I shall also expect my Sister Willy will answer the letter I wrote to her sometime ago, and that Polly will answer hers that I now send.

So backward a Spring I think never happened within the time of my remembrance. Nobody here has thought of gardening yet except one or two Ladies, and that perhaps was rather to boast of, than from an expectation of reaping any considerable advantages. No doubt you have done as little in that way, up with you, as the people here, for the Frost must have been as severe, if not more so, there than here.

Strawberries, I am informed abound here in the greatest profusion—

perhaps the only Article in which Dorset excells Kent. They have not naturally so many I believe here, but they are more cultivated in the Gardens. Should you have it in your power to pay proper Attention to your Strawberry bed this Summer, I think, I might venture to say, you would have as fine and as many as anybody.

Mr. Stevens, with his usual kindness, has offered to bring down for me anything that he conveniently can. So good, and perhaps the only, opportunity should not be missed; therefore, if the Summer Coat and whatever else you may have to send me are not ready, I wish you would as soon as possible have them prepared. I left my Measure with I. Bullen. I had rather have the Coat made there than in Cambridge. The tailor in this place is the most shocking bungler I ever saw. I believe the only other Article that I left was Summer Stockings. Mr. Stevens will let you know when he leaves Kent.

I have not yet said anything of Mrs. Goldsborough and her Son, and I believe I have nothing more to say than what you must by this time know already. They are both very well, as is Mrs. Smith also. The D[octo]r is expected every day, so that it is probable Mrs. Smith will return in a week or two, tho' I have not been informed so. Master Robert (for that is the Young Gentleman's name) has never yet made his appearance downstairs, so I cannot give you my opinion of him.

Please to give my love to the children and kiss them for me.

I am Madam,

Your dutiful and affect[ionate] Son,

NICHOLAS RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
Dover]

In Ann Moore's girlhood a friend and neighbor was Elizabeth Graeme of Graeme Park, a venerable mansion in Montgomery County near Philadelphia. It is still standing. She had spent a considerable time in England before her marriage to Hugh Henry Ferguson, a Scotsman, but returned to her old home and lived there the balance of her life. The Becky Smith whom Elizabeth Ferguson mentioned in the following letter was Ann Ridgely's sister, Rebecca Moore, the wife of the Rev. William Smith, first Provost of the University of Pennsylvania. The Mrs. Bond to whose care she sent a bundle for Ann Ridgely

was Mrs. Ridgely's sister, Williamina, who married Phineas Bond, doctor of physick. Williamina Cadwalader, "Mrs. Cad" as the family intimately called her, the wife and for many years the widow of General John Cadwalader, an officer of the Revolutionary War, was a daughter of the Bonds. At the death of her husband in Maryland in 1786, she came back to live near her parents in Philadelphia. To her we owe a great many letters scintillating with wit and sometimes biting criticism, brimming over with gossip, and underlying all, warm affection for her widowed aunt in the country at Eden Hill Farm and devotion to her aunt's children. Her good offices included chaperoning the little girls at boarding houses in Philadelphia, where they were tutored by Jesse Waterman and others and attended Quesnet's Dancing School in Harmony Court, learned to "tambour" and draw, and incidentally to spell and write and cypher, without exposure to the "low company" at boarding schools, of which "Mrs. Cad" highly disapproved. These relatives and friends are "met with," as "Mrs. Cad" would say, in the correspondence of succeeding years.

Graeme Park, August 15, '84

Dear Madam:

I had the Honour of a letter from Dr. Ridgely dated the 12th of July accompanied by L 10/8's of Mr. Cary's debt, for which I Sincerely thank Dr. Ridgely, as to the part of the Business I think the two payments I have now received in all One Hundred and Ninety Seven pounds twenty five shillings. And if I calculate right there is due to me One Hundred and Three pounds out of which Dr. Ridgely will be so good (when it comes, into his Hands) to deduct Mr. Bassett's Charges, and the Forty Pounds I promised poor Mr. Cary for his Children.

I should like to know if the Ferver of the unhappy man's zeal had settled into anything like Rationality for I am sorry for him and his Family, I can truly say.

It is with Concern I find that you have been indisposed but hope it is of a temporary nature as Dr. Ridgely says that you are Better. He is so obliging as to say you will resume your pen, you can take it up with so much Ease that it is a pity you should ever lay it down, indeed writing seems Hereditary to your Family, though I assure you I am seriously angry with Becky Smith. She has never wrote to me since she was a Grand-Mother. I

suppose she feels so Consequential on the Occasion that she disdains to hold Commerce with any but those who have done good in that way in their day and generation and I am totally to be discarded like the Fig tree in the Gospel with a "why Cumbereth it the Ground"?

I have never yet seen your dear Venerable Mother since she lived in the City, by which you may be certain I have never been there. I assure [you] the prospect of Seeing her well and in tolerable Spirits is among the very few things that I propose pleasure in when I go to a place that I seldom See, and which now becomes almost a matter of Indifference to me, if ever, as you may conclude when I tell you it is now two years Since I was there. But all these things receive their zest from times & situations as you well know. If you ever should come to Philadelphia I wish I may be there at the time as I am sure you have so many agreeable Connections there and you are so attached to your own home that you will never protract your Stay to Visit me in my Old Fashioned Valley.

I heard you added one to your family last Winter, do you nurse it? I hope she is well. I am a Stupid Correspondent and I know nothing that is stirring. I have never even seen a Balloon which not to have seen is the very pretention of Gothic ignorance; perhaps we may exchange Visits in them if their improvements are as Rapid as their progress; a most fashionable Vehicle no doubt it will be and if made so as to convey our Sex will not be remarked as (the first Voyagers have) that they were struck with the profound Stillness that prevailed in the Upper Regions.

My dear Mrs. Ridgely will not be offended with the Freedom I take in sending with this a Roll of Furniture Fringe of my own spinning and weaving. I believe that is enough for a Bed and two Window Curtains, but it is of no Consequence to me whether it is honored with a Chamber or a parlor Station provided she gives it house Room. It looks Coarse but I found the coarse fringe works so much better and shakes out when damp without Combing, that all my own is of that size and when made up has been preferred to finer. But I will not detain you longer on so trifling a subject, but remain

Your obliged friend
E. Ferguson

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
Dover, Kent County
With a bundle to the care of Mrs. Bond]

The Gothic ignorance to which Mrs. Ferguson admits, in saying she has never seen a balloon ascension, is interesting and perplexing. Her letter was written in 1784. There is no doubt about the date at the letter head and the context shows that it was written while Charles Ridgely was living; his death occurred in the fall of 1785. The baby daughter was clearly Ann Ridgely, born in February, 1784.

Elizabeth Graeme Ferguson was a person of enthusiastic nature. While Blanchard made the first flight in America in January, 1793, it was his forty-fifth ascent and he had attempted a flying machine as early as 1781. Jacques Etienne Montgolfier of France and his brother, Joseph, built a hot air balloon and in September, 1783, King Louis and Marie Antoinette witnessed the first ascension in which a sheep, a cock, and a duck were the passengers. By the end of that year human beings made ascents and all Europe was in a frenzy. An experimenter, Carnes, attempted an ascension in Philadelphia in 1784, but was unsuccessful.

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In her "old fashioned valley," Elizabeth Ferguson kept in touch with the happenings overseas and in her neighboring city. She corresponded with relatives abroad and read the news sheets published in Philadelphia. If she witnessed Blanchard's flight in 1793, it was not "news" to her that a man could travel by air. Perhaps, too, she learned then of the letter George Washington gave to Blanchard to carry aloft—the first air-borne letter in the United States.

To revert to the Dover family, one of Charles Ridgely's sons by his first marriage was Charles, who directed his attention to a mercantile calling, and in consultation with his uncle, Benjamin Wynkoop, of Philadelphia, made a voyage to St. Croix with a cargo of goods. His father advised him as follows:

Instructions for Mr. Charles Ridgely Jun[io]r.

As soon as you arrive at Philad[elphi]a you are to consult Mr. Wynkoop, on the intended Voyage to St. Croix, and what will best suit for their Market; whether Flour, Lumber or what; with the kind & sorts of Lumber: —also what Money you ought to deal in, and what Goods should bring back, as Coffee, Rum, Molasses, Sugar (& of what kind), Pimento, Oranges, Lemons, Limes, &c. indeed you ought to minute down every-

thing you can respecting the Productions of the Islands: All these things you may be fully inform'd in, if Mr. Sims will let Mr. Wynkoop & you see & examine his Letters and Acc[oun]ts from St. Croix, together with the Information to be obtained elsewhere. If Mr. Wynkoop disapproves the Voyage to St. Croix, at this time, then take his Opinion whether you had better buy any, & what Articles, & ship them for Lisbon, or Cadiz, L'Orient, London, Bristol, Cork, Glasgow, Halifax, Boston, Charles Town &c., & what Articles you should order in return. In that case inform me directly of his opinion; but if the opportunity requires to be instantly used, or otherwise it may be lost, then you had best follow his advice. Get his assistance in procuring & examining the necessary papers, or Invoices, Clearances &c.

If your plan should be altered, perhaps you will find it best to ship your Goods & return home, till their return.

Have your Cargo by all means insured, both going out & returning.

If you proceed in person to St. Croix, or elsewhere, it would be most prudent to obtain recommendatory Letters; from both English & French Gentlemen; perhaps it may be best to take with you something from Mr. Dickinson as Chief Magistrate of Pennsylvania; if Mr. Wynkoop thinks it would be usefull, I apprehend it may be easily obtain'd.

If you go to Sea, treat the Seamen with Courtesy & Kindness, but not Familiarity. To the Commander behave with politeness. Remember that on board ship, the Captain is the *great man*, and a slight resistance may be call'd Mutiny; and a Person may be brought into great Trouble & real danger. But on Shore the Laws will reach him as readily as anybody else.

If you go into any foreign Country comply with the Laws; and do not violate the Manners & Customs of the place. Most carefully keep out of all Disputes; especially religious ones.

Never take strong Liquor to such a degree as to heat you at all; it is dangerous to your Health, Morals, Reputation & Fortune. Never let Complaisance lead you to debauch; be moderate in your diet. Be abed early.

Be attentive to your Business; and to the Discharge of every Duty incumbent.

Be temperate in all things. Keep your Passions under: be vigilant: Be courteous: be complaisant to all; but put yourself in the power of none. Make few Promises; but keep what you make.

Be bound for no Man: Be no Man's Security: This is a measure replete with future *danger* and distress.

Be constant and zealous in the discharge of religious Duties: wise & good Men will applaud you for it: and what is more, your own Conscience will approve it.

Spend the Sabbath Day, as it ought to be spent, not in rioting or idle amusements: but in reading the Scriptures or some pious Composition; or in communing with your own Heart; which, perhaps, is the most improving of all Exercises.

May the Almighty protect you; and grant to you a prosperous and happy Voyage!

I am, my dear Son,
Your most affect[ionat]e
father
CHARLES RIDGELY

8 April 1785

A day or two later, the father added:

Dover 10 April 1785
5 o'clock P.M.

My dear Charles,

By this time I hope you are happily arrived at Philad[elphi]a. The wind has, I think, been favorable yesterday & today. And this Letter is a Proof that you are not out of my mind. I do not yet know of an Opportunity of sending it by: but have some Expectation of its going by Mr. Wm. Brown. However, I intend to have it ready for any Conveyance that may Offer; my Example in this instance I hope you will follow.

Yesterday I rec[eive]d a letter from your Brother Nickey. He does not mention any Indisposition—from thence I conclude he was well; nor did any Letter come for you, which leads me to suppose that he never got your Letter. If you have not waited on Mr. Chew's Family, before receiving this, I beg you to do it without delay: Mr. Chew I am sure is well disposed to do you any Service in his power: And I believe the Family have a Friendship for you.

I have hitherto omitted to mention to you a Subject that a young Gentleman ought to be cautioned about; that is Gaming: Remember, I most

earnestly beg you not to game at all; let no Persuasion lead you into this most dangerous & destructive practice: Fly Card, Dice, Billiard, & all gaming without Exception. If at any time you should be pressed by your Company, and cannot otherwise handsomely get off, plead my paternal Injunction; to a Friend that will be enough: and to any body it ought to be enough; you may make it so by a little firmness.

Be at your Lodgings early every Evening. On all accounts this will be prudent: But the frequency of Robberies in Philad[elphi]a makes it absolutely necessary: Besides, a man of Business, as you are to be, should be out of the way of Riots, Disipation and Quarrels.

12 April—Tuesday

Pray let me know as soon as possible whether you really go to St. Croix & when you sail, the name of the Captain, the name of the Vessel & whether she is a Ship, Brig or what, & what port you go to, also where you now lodge.

Write without fail by every opportunity. Perhaps you may meet with one at the Capes, at Sea, or at St. Croix.

Your Mother has a Cold; the rest of us are very well.

May God Almighty bless & protect you, and grant you a happy & prosperous Voyage!

I am, dear Charles, your most affec[tionat]e Father
CHARLES RIDGELY

If you write from sea, order
your letter to the care of
Mr. Benj[ami]n Wynkoop in Philadelphia.

[*Addressed to* Mr. Charles Ridgely, Jun[io]r
to be left at Mr. Benj. Wynkoop's—Philadelphia]

The following letter from Ann, Charles' stepmother, shows her deep affection for the lad.

Dover April 12th 1785

My dear Charles,

I have so bad a cold that I can hardly hold up my head, or see a sylable I write, but I am determined to write to you, tho' I can think of nothing

but my own complaints. I have been trying to forget them for this hour past, in hopes of writing more agreeably, but the headache is not easily laid aside; I will in spite of it tell you that the children are almost crazy to see you again. George roar'd half an hour the Even[in]g you left us and said he would not go to bed till his Bro[ther] Charles came home again. Harry, very often, with a sigh, says he wishes you would have taken him with you instead of Venture. Poor Willy says she prays that you may have as much good luck as you can wish y[ou]rself. Polly says she longs for July for then she shall see you again.

I see by the Papers that Mr. Sim's Vessel is arrived. Pray let us hear from you as particularly as possible by the first opp[o]r[tunity]. Pray my Dear Charles be carefull of y[ou]r self—you cannot imagine how anxious all y[ou]r friends are for you. You do not know how much you are beloved. This is a period in y[ou]r life on w[hi]ch almost everything depends; a prudent & oeconomical conduct at this time may have a very happy Effect. For your own good I most sincerely wish you to pursue it. Your Father, I am convinced, is determined to do everything in his power for you when once he finds you fix'd in the pursuit of any regular kind of business. Once more let me beg to hear from you before you leave Philad[elphi]a. The children all desire their Loves to you.

I am my D[ea]r Charles
Y[ou]r ever affectionate mother
A. Ridgely

P.S.
Dover will be improv'd in fashionable & polite entertainment before your return I make no doubt: Y[ou]r Brother is now at a Tea Party—it is the second, you know, that has been here lately and I suppose they will be kept up.
Every Body desires their Loves to you, particularly Jenny.

The following letter is from Charles Ridgely to his son Charles, in Philadelphia.

Dover 12 June, 1785

Dear Charles,

This Letter is to be left at Mr. Wynkoops for you; where I hope it will not be many days, before you receive it after returning from an agreeable & prosperous Voyage; for such I hope it will prove to you.

Immediately on your return, I should be glad to see you, if your Business will permit, or at least as soon as your Business will permit. In the meantime I desire you would not by any means engage yourself in a Voyage anywhere without informing me of your plan first. I cannot agree to your going to the West Indies in the summer. Nor do I think it wise at present for you to go to Europe. But if the Trade to the Havanna is opened, perhaps it might be worth while to send a Cargo thither. With respect to what I have suggested, I would have you consult Mr. Wynkoop on your Arrival.

The moment you arrive, write to me, & acquaint me with the Success of your Voyage.

We all have enjoyed pretty good Health since you left us. Your Brother was up from Cambridge in May, & was very well.

I have nothing to add but my Prayers for your Happiness; which you have! God bless you! I am,

Your affect[ionat]e Father
CHARLES RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Mr. Charles Ridgely, Jun[io]r
To be left at Mr. Benj. Wynkoop's Philadelphia]

To return to the family on the Green in 1785: Charles Ridgely had not spared himself in his practice. It involved country riding on indifferent roads in all weathers and at all hours, and in addition, he gave much of his energy to the service of his country and state.

In the summer of 1785, he had a violent and protracted fever and hardly had he recovered, when, in the autumn, he developed a severe gastric condition. The symptoms became alarming and his wife wrote urgent letters to two of his old colleagues, James Anderson of Chestertown, and Joshua Clayton of New Castle, to come to him. Both were prevented by extreme illness in their own households. Letters explaining their inability to attend him follow, the first in full, the second summarized:

Madam

I have had great uneasiness that I could not ride down to see my good Friend, the Doctor. My son has been ever since last Monday morning so extremely ill that I could not possibly leave him, his fever yet continues

very violent without the least perceptible remission. The moment that he is in such a state that I can with security leave him you may depend on my being with you. It would give me great pleasure to be of any service to the Doctor, whose life I consider of the utmost importance not only to his own family but to the community.

I am, Madam,

Y[ou]r most Obed[ien]t Serv[an]t
JOSHUA CLAYTON
29th Sept. 1785

Chest[e]r Town
Sept. 23, 1785

Dear Madam

"It w[ou]ld afford me every sensible pleasure to contribute by my presence to Doct[o]r Ridgely's recovery or to your peace and satisfaction of mind but Providence by laying the hand of affliction on myself, wife and many of our family absolutely forbids my complying with your request."

This opening paragraph of the letter written by Dr. James Anderson is followed by several prosey pages in which the Doctor refers to a former illness of Charles Ridgely's, from the nature of which he is inclined to deduce that the present complaint is due to a summer fever augmented by a liver condition of some duration.

After a long and weary dissertation on what he thinks may be the disease and its cause, he prescribes corrective medicines for "aciditis," such as salt, Tartar, Wormwood, cold infusions of Camomile tea, a decoction of Peruvian Bark acidulated with the elixir of Vitriol. He dilates on absorbents with or without rhubarb. In order to increase the patient's strength he suggests he be given beef or mutton tea made by boiling two ounces of meat in two quarts of water until the liquid is reduced to a pint. The Doctor remarks that "a cup of this now and then sets for the most part on the stomach exceeding light and easy." He ends his letter by saying, that, if the attending physician should judge any hint that he had suggested to be useful, it would abundantly repay him for the small trouble of penning it.

The Doctor then signs himself

Yours Affect[ionately]
J.A.

No medical aid proved availing and Charles Ridgely's death, November 25, 1785, when he was but forty-seven years of age, shocked his family and friends. His brother-in-law, Dr. William Smith, D.D., came from Chestertown to Dover to preach his funeral sermon at Christ Church. He was buried in the churchyard among the graves of his family.

A few letters of condolence to his widow follow.

Graeme Park—December 25, 1785

My dear Madam

Of late my dear Friend I never take my Pen in hand to you, but to offer the weak though Sincere tribute of unavailing friendship: Your Heart seemed to be wrung with poignant Sorrow for the loss of those who had reached years beyond the Lot of David's Span, how much more so now when it has pleased the Allmighty to call to himself I make no doubt the worthy partner of your Life and the Father of your Babes. To enumerate his virtues and good qualities is but in other words to sum up the greatness of your Loss and taken in one point of light is but a poor Subject of Consolation at best . . . to a truly affectionate mind such as I know yours to be to dwell on the mental perfection of those we shall see no more. I apprehend, my dear Mrs. Ridgely, that strong maternal affection which you have shown ever since you had Children will perhaps be the most forcible Stimulation that can be suggested to bear up under your present very heavy Dispensation, the double Capacity in which you are called upon to act will unavoidably engage your attention. What a happy Circumstance is it that the young Gentlemen, Sons to Dr. Ridgely, and you, are on such good terms as you mentioned to me in your Last, Do when you write me tell me how many children you have. Is Mrs. Smith near enough to see you often? Never were there Sisters better calculated by the goodness of their understanding and improved minds to render Consolation and improvement to each other for any trying occasion. Dear Mrs. Smith sees everything in so entertaining a point of Light that she will make one attend to her whether one wills or not. Mrs. Bond has a Hundred Estimable qualities; was I writing to either of the above mentioned Ladies I could enlarge on the third but shall be Silent.

And, my dear Madam, how much would it add to your . . . comfort if anyone or all of you were within walking distance of your Humble Servant for we are all of us such Domestic fire-side beings that a certain degree of nearness seems absolutely necessary to make us meet. Characters of such a Cast may well be compared to the Magnet and the Loadstone. They must be placed at a Certain point Before the attraction operates and then when that prevails the two Objects adhere with utmost force. As to myself I am still here with my faithful associate, Miss B. S. partly from *Indolence*, and partly from Habit and partly from Reason. I seem to prefer this sequestered Spot to any other on this habitable Globe, but I find the failure of my attempt to Sell the land Separate, will oblige me to part with the whole which I would do for eight thousand pounds. There are excellent improvements and five hundred and sixty Acres of Land but you know by Mr. Hall it is hard to sell through a friend.

I know not if you recollect a long Poem you had and wrote to your sister Smith before you were married. You now perhaps more than ever feel the force of the words in it "Lean not on Earth." I will in your own hand Enclose it to you, may it whisper peace and Soothe your sorrows is the Sincere wish of, Madam, your oblig'd friend,

ELIZA[BETH] FERGUSON

From Elk Ridge, Maryland, is a letter written by Elizabeth Dorsey, a sister of Charles Ridgely.

Elk Ridge Ja[nua]ry 1, 1786

My dear Sister

I have heard of your irreparable loss. To endeavor to comfort would be needless or rather an insult to such distress as yours nor am I capable of giving comfort who want myself. All I can do is to sympathize with you which Heaven knows I do, I should think it a blessing at this time to be with you. It is our indispensible duty to resign ourselves to the will of God though hard to do when it is his good pleasure to take from us what we hold most dear on earth yet his unerring wisdom knows what is best for us. To him, therefore, we should look up for comfort it is he who supports the widow and fatherless who has said put your trust in me and I will never leave nor forsake you.

Let us often and only reflect on the goodness of our Blessed Redeemer who offered himself a willing sacrifice to make us happy when all sorrow will be wiped from our eyes, where I trust my beloved Brother is now blest in the Smiles of A Mercyfull judge. Consider he is taken from evil to cum let me beg of you my Dear Sister to endeavor to be reconciled to the Will of the Allmighty who alone is able to redress our Grievances.

Pray take care of your health for the sake of your dear little children whose tender years require constant attention and whose situation is truly distressing now after praying God to take you and them under his peculiar care I shall conclude my dear Madam your sincear and affect[ionate] Sister,

ELIZABETH DORSEY

Old and valued friends of Charles Ridgely and Ann were John and Mary Dickinson. Though John Dickinson's public life required his residence in Wilmington and in Philadelphia a great part of the time, he kept a residence in Kent County and was ever ready to do a friendly office for his old neighbors there. Mary Dickinson wrote from Wilmington soon after Charles Ridgely's death:

It has not proceeded from want of thinking of my dear Friend, that I have not by this means presented myself to her before now; thee has been the Subject of my daily thoughts but I was unwilling to Intrude on thy Sorrow which I believe to be deep, and beyond the power of words to Soften. This I have known by Experience, that Divine Goodness is so merciful as to sustain, under those Afflictions his Wisdom sees meet to appoint, or we should perish under the Stroke. Thy Children the Object of thy care demand every Exertion, and the Religion we profess teaches us that submission to the Will of Him who Governs the Universe, is our Only refuge in all the Calamitys that we may meet in our Journey, but oh my Dear Fr[ien]d, full well I know we cannot attain it unless assisted by his Grace. To Strive with all our might to obtain the prize of being what our God would have us to be is the only object worthy our pursuit, a few more years and our course will be finished, perhaps a shorter period, be ye also ready is a weighty Lesson, let us endeavor to rise above this Globe, to fix our Affections where we are promised a Happiness not to be broken by Separation.

Please to give our affect[ionat]e remembrance to thy Children, and accept it my Dear Mrs. Ridgely from J. Dickinson, and thy sincerely

Affect[ionat]e
and Simpathiz[in]g Fr[ien]d
M. Dickinson.

Wilmington Jan[uar]y 17th 1786.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover]

The responsibilities which Ann faced on her husband's death were many. There were three grown stepsons, Nicholas, Abraham, and Charles, as well as her own five children. A large portion of Charles' estate was made up of farms. His will divided these tracts of land among his children but Ann had to supervise many of them, besides having the entire management of the home plantation, Eden Hill, which had been left to her for her life. Here she decided to make her home. She planted many fine shade trees, including a half-mile lane of catalpas. This tree became fashionable after John Bartram, the botanist, introduced it to Philadelphia. She established peach orchards and the farm is still famous for the quality and flavor of its peaches. Strawberries and asparagus were her pride; her flower garden was her special delight. The large, ancient boxwood, which survives today, gives an indication of Ann's garden plan.

She used tact and yet was candid in her attitude toward her stepchildren, and her devotion to her own children was not allowed to interfere with the discipline she believed it her duty to impose on them. As she grew older, she developed a really judicial habit of mind; she was austere, yet truly generous; frank, but affectionate.

To maintain the health of a household was in those days extremely difficult. The country was subject to malaria, not yet recognized as such, but prevalent. Stagnant pools and unscreened windows brought the poisonous mosquito into the nursery and the care of food was not understood. Flies were numerous; the children were frequently exposed to grave fever epidemics and to smallpox. At times Ann Ridgely appealed to James Anderson of Chestertown on whose friendship she

leaned, as she depended on his medical advice. With Abraham, one of her stepsons, studying medicine under him, she naturally turned to the doctor when local advice seemed inadequate. In 1786 the little children had high fever and Cato, one of the men servants, was dispatched to Chestertown, seeking aid. The following letter gives Dr. James Anderson's response and is followed by one from Abraham himself. Elk Ridge in Howard County is near Baltimore and was reached from Chestertown by a sail across the Chesapeake Bay. Abraham's Aunt Dorsey and the Warfields lived nearby.

Chestertown, Maryland

Madam

Abraham has been gone from us a week. As the people were healthy here, he thought it a favorable opportunity to visit his relations at Elk Ridge.

It is difficult to prescribe for the children as their Situation may vary before the return of your Messenger. The usual method I observe in the treatment of the Fevers of Children is: First, if accompanied with topical and inflam[mator]y pain & they are not very young, some blood is taken away; as your Son has been sick several days, it may not now be proper & perhaps was not necessary in the beginning, as the pain was of short duration; afterwards the first passages are evacuated by gentle means, unless where there may be suspicion of worms, when a mercurial dose is intermitted with the emetic or evacuation medicines proper to answer that purpose & with occasional dose of Carolina pink root tea. Antimonials in small doses are then prescribed for the Fever & to relax the skin. If in two or three days tryal, of the small antimonial doses, the symptoms of Fever do not yield & the superficies continue rigid, the other remedies are aided by blisters to the extremities . . . if these happly blend to bring about a remission of fever some preparations of Bark may finish the cure. A sight of your letter to Abraham which Cato told me you desired I should open in case of his absence, has occasion'd this letter of advice; which I suspect from the report of Doct[o]r Miller's abilities may be unnecessary & the propriety of any advice or method I have given must be wholly submitted to his direction, as he has the advantage of being on the spot, & must be the judge of the treatment proper for the Children. It will give me considerable satisfaction if any advice of mine sh[oul]d be so fortunate as to meet with

Doct[o]r Miller's approbation & so contribute in the least degree to the Children's safety.

I hope their danger is not so great as you seem to apprehend; you cannot, as the feelings of a mother will bias your judgment, be so capable to determine the degree of violence with which the disease rages, as a bystander and one besides who has made the Prognostication of Diseases so much his study as part of the education of a Physician. I remain

Your Friend
JAMES M. ANDERSON

Then follows this letter from Abraham:

Chestertown Feb[ruar]y 11th 1786

Most Honour'd Madam

I received your two very kind letters by Cato, I should have answer'd them by the same, but my being out til late the night he came, & his going so early the next morning put it out of my power.

Nothing could give me so much pleasure as to hear of your being settled so much to your satisfaction; I am in great hopes you will have your health better in the country, than in town. I'm very happy in hearing Polly is so much better, before I hear again I'm in hopes she will be quite Recovered.

I am as happily situated with Dr. Anderson as I could possibly be anywhere, indeed more so than I expected to be, his family is under such good regulations, & everything is conducted so cleverly that I'm exceedingly pleased with it: His wife's sister, a very sensible, industrious woman, keeps his house, we have our meals ready at the same hour every day; nine o'clock is our bed time, & day light our time of getting up; but I very much fear, I shall soon have to move, tho' the D[octo]r as yet has said nothing to me about it. I am very much in hopes that my Brother Charles & Mr. Magaw may agree about the plantation, for I long to hear of his being fixed to some kind of business.

General Cadwalader died yesterday about 3 o'clock after an illness of a few Days.

I am Dear Madam

Your Affect[iona]te Son
ABRAM RIDGELY

To return to the family at the farm, we find in the spring of 1786 Ann writing to Abraham congratulating him on his "good share of health."

March 14th, 1786

My Dear Abram

I am glad to find by your last letter that you enjoy a good share of health. That is a blessing at any time, but I think when we are favour'd with it, in a season so particularly unhealthy as you say the neighborhood of Chestertown at present is, it is such a fact as demands more than common gratitude.

The small pox is all about this neighbourhood, except in Dover, and I last night heard that they intend to inoculate there on Sunday next. I have nine in my family to have it. It was a matter I did not seem to mind very much formerly but now I confess I am distressed at the thoughts of it.

Since I wrote you last my two D[ea]r Little Boys and my Dear Nancy have all been sick. Nancy is now very well again but the boys are not. George has had a severe shaking ague and a high fever this morn[in]g.

I have desired y[ou]r Brothers to write to you and I hope they will do it by Freeman who is to be the Bearer of this. Your Brother Charles has sold me his Lot where poor old Thomas used to live. I should not have made the purchase but I found he would sell & I did not chuse it should go out of the family as both you and Harry joyned it. I shall pay him good Bonds to the amount of £200 as soon as the Deed is written. He wanted to go into Trade and chose to turn all he could into cash; what do you think of my purchase? I expect you will think I have paid for it, and especially when I tell you that he has reserved one acre of it adjoining Battells, so that I have only five acres and three quarters, but that is improv'd a good deal since you saw it, they say, for your Brother has put up an excellent new fence, had the land plowed, manured and is to sow it with Oats, some part with Clover & some with Timothy grass seed. I am not well, my head aches always or very very often at least. My Polly looks worse and seems weaker every day; she keeps about, but she has fevers every evening that must destroy her if they are not remov'd soon. Our Physicians are not much relied on, they do not attend people as they have been used to be attended in this place. This I have heard; perhaps it is not true for I do not know it to be so from experience. One of our little Black children has had a very sore eye it was really very bad. Doct[o]r Miller was the only person

who had shown any particular attention to the family in affliction and as he had hardly omitted a day of calling to know how we all were even after we moved, I thought it best to employ him as the Family Physician. Whether I shall get him to inoculate the family or not is not yet determined; what do you think of it? I wish to have your opinion. The pock is said to be of the most favourable kind ever known almost. The two girls Willy and Polly desire their love to you and beg I will tell you they shall be affronted if you do not write to them as they have both written to you.

The cough Harry & George had in the Fall is within a few days past as bad as ever it was & I cannot tell what to do for them. Nancy has a little of it yet too and I made that an objection to her taking the small pox but your Brother Charles tells me he mention'd this before Doct[o]r Clayton and he said it ought not to be an objection, for that the medicines for the small pox were the best that could be given to remove the cough. Write to me I beg of you and believe me my D[ea]r Son

Y[ou]r ever affectionate Mother,
A. Ridgely

That their half-brother continued to be interested in the little girls is evidenced by the following letter of June 18, 1786.

Chester Town June 18 1786

Honour'd Madam

I take this opportunity to inform you of a School Mistress who has lately come from England to this place, where I think it likely you may have the girls taught every thing that they could learn in Philadelphia & at half the expense; & in case of Sickness you might hear from them in a few hours. The Mistress comes with good recommendations & keeps her School in excellent order: several ladies have seen her work & think it very handsome & well done. They can live at Mr. John Andersons' a Brother to the Doctor & be under the care of Mrs. Anderson a very sensible, polite well bred woman, who I am convinced will be careful, attentive, and take all possible pains with them; she lives about eighty yards from the Doctors', fifty from Mrs. Smith & about as far from the School & in a high healthy part of the Town. Mrs Anderson & the Doctor each send two of their Daughters to her School. The advantage of being so near to so eminent & attentive a Physi-

cian as Doctor Anderson is, would be very considerable, as you must know. If you would wish them to learn musick or french, we have very good masters of both & in all probability there will soon be a Dancing school here. I wish you would consider of this thoroughly, & let me know your determination by the return of this messenger which will be on Tuesday.

On Wednesday last a man in this town got a blow on his head from one of his comrades with a jack plum, which it is thought will kill him; a large part of his skull was broke in, upon the brain. If this man dies it will be the fourth murder since Christmas, the villian who did this injury is run off, the others are all scared; there are four to be tried here next week for their lives & it is generaly thought three of them will be hung.

Mrs. Smith sets off this Day for Philad[elphi]a. She has not time to write, but desires her love.

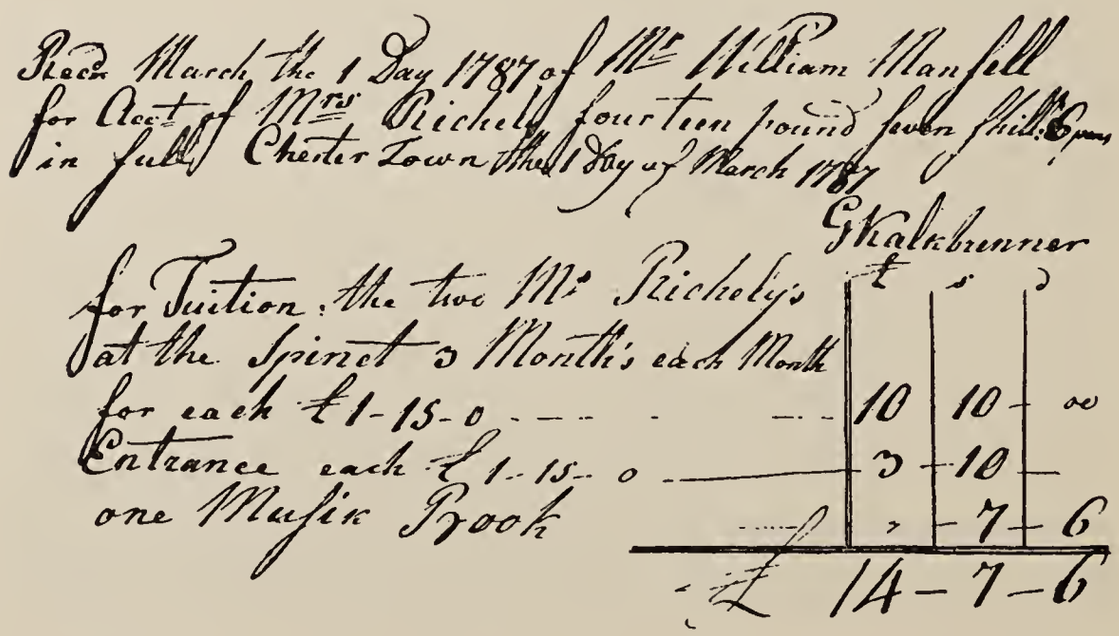
Mrs. Anderson's terms for Board is £35 each including washing.

I am, Dear Madam

Your dutiful son

ABRAM RIDGELY

There is no record of further correspondence between Abraham and his stepmother on this subject, but we learn that Williamina and her sister Mary were at school at Chestertown the following April.



Recd March the 1 Day 1787 of Mr William Mansfell for Acct of Mrs Richely fourteen pound seven shill. & six pence in full Chester Town the 1 Day of March 1787

G Walkbrenner

	£	s	d
for Tuition the two Mr Richely's at the Spinet 3 Month's each Month for each £1-15-0	10	10	00
Entrance each £1-15-0	3	10	
one Music Book		7	6
£	14	7	6

Chester Town April 6th, 1787

My dear Mama

I am perfectly well, I was downstairs both yesterday and today. Sisters head is a great deal better than when you left her. The Ship party was postponed till Monday last Miss Letty and Brother Abram was of the party. Miss Letty came home quite in Love with Mr. Palyard. But I persuaded her not to dispose of her heart till she return'd to Dover that she might see Mr. Loockerman, for I was sure that he would steal her Heart, but she says that Mr. Loockerman is two quick in his motions, she can not second him! but as we bring Miss Gresham up Miss Letty thinks that if she had any thoughts of Mr. Loockerman Miss Gresham would be her rival. As she understands music perhaps she might get a fiddle as George did from old Mr. Loockerman! Give my love to Brothers and Sister Nancy. Give my very respectful compliments to Mrs. Wilson, and Mrs. Loockerman, the Miss Rodneys send their compliments to you, and Miss Nancy Bassett. Please to give my love to all the family and to Betsy Read.

Believe me my D[ea]r Mama, I remain your ever Dutiful and affectionate Daughter,

WILLIAMINA RIDGELY.

Abraham removed to Philadelphia to pursue his study of physick and all was not going smoothly in his courtship of the girl he had left behind in Chestertown. His relation to his old medical preceptor, James Anderson, must have been exceptionally intimate for a student, as he was evidently begging his assistance in urging "Hessy" to relent and write to him. The old Doctor replied, refusing to talk of love as he felt himself a very poor physician for that complaint.

D[ea]r. Abram,

I have urged Hessy for some time past to answer your letters, but in vain; she continues inflexible in this point. I wish'd the more earnestly for this since your return to Philadelphia, as I perceive my temper & genius does not suit to stand in between you—I am rough, plain spoken & often undesign'dly severe & you two are of exceeding quick sensible minds easily alarm'd & too ready to be discomposed at the slip of the pen or an unguarded Expression.

It was on this account & that I might not give you pain that I talked nothing of love & for the same reason I must admit it here, as well as in my last letter. As you are so soon to be down this disappointment from her not writing will be tolerable.

I did not receive your letters of the 23 with the accounts until the 3 of this instant. W. Ringgold has not taken any of the Fox-Glove yet—he has been much oppressed lately & the Dropsy increases fast upon him. As soon as he rests from the hurry of some late purging medicines he intends to begin with the Fox-Glove. Your friends here are all well.

Your sincere friend
JAMES M. ANDERSON

Chestertown
Feb[ruar]y 4, 1788

Perhaps Doctor Anderson relented and prescribed a love potion. We know that the obdurate lady consented; that Abraham and his Hessy were married and lived happily for some years. There was but one child of this marriage who lived beyond infant years. She was named Mary Wynkoop for her grandmother. She died when she was but seventeen.

We have one letter from her pen, a child's production, written when she was perhaps eight. It is included because of its childish appeal.

Lancaster August 26th

My dear Mama

I received your letter yesterday witch I was very glad to hear from both of you, and Mary Nixon. I want to sea you, and papa verry mutch and all of my acquaintances. Wm. W. is very porly and has an ague every evening. Mrs. W. has gawn to Delmar. I think I feal better; whe are at a very cleavour boarding house, our horse has bean sent out to parsture but he has cum in and whe meant to follow papas advise and ride every Day. I am very sorry to hear that Cozzin Hester is sick and Aunt. I have not received the letter you rote by Mrs. Stu. . . . Due right ofen to let mee know how you are. Guive a grait deal of love to papa for mee, as whe whare a going to Lancaster we sean grate stones as large as buchel—oh ten times

larger—in the rode. From Elkton to the blue bowl [Blue Ball] was dread fawl. Thare is lime stone warter at Mrs Musser boarding hous ware we board It is deliteful in dead and whe get good things every day for dinner Miss Hariot Musser sends her compliments . . . .
Mrs. Wilmer sends her' love to you and . . . .
tel Papa I send a grate deal of love to him,
And a great deal to you
Give my love to Mrs. R
And Sally Winkoop
rite as ofen as you can

Yours affectionate child
MARY WYNKOOP RIDGELY

May I get a handsome silver thimble
at half a dollar.

In the summer of 1787 an old tie was renewed in Ann's life. Her brother, Thomas William Moore, was a Tory. He fought under the British flag in the Revolutionary War, and all intercourse between him and his Delaware relations was broken.

We do not know at what precise date he went to live in England, but he made his home there after the end of the war. His children were educated in England, but at some date before the summer of 1787 he had removed to Horton, Nova Scotia. From there he wrote to his sister, Ann, who was deeply moved by this proof of his affection for her.

When, a few years later, he was appointed British Consul at Newport, Rhode Island, visits were exchanged between the cousins at Eden Hill and at Newport.

N[ova] Scotia, Horton June 1, 1787

My very dear Sister

I have scarce a minute allow'd me to write this letter, yet I must embrace the opportunity to tell you that I sincerely love you, that I am with all the Family very well & desirably situated under that blessed Government which I fought for to support, & which has amply rewarded my services. How are you my dear Nan? and how are your dear Children? let me know I pray. Kiss them for me & bless them for me also, & let me hear from you

very particularly. I am in dayly expectations of seeing my daughter Willy, her Husband & my three Grand Children with my daughter Janet as they were to leave England in April for Halifax. I wish they were safe on shore. I have sent a Barrell of Salmon per this vessel between my Sister Smith & you to the care of Becky Bond Philad[elphi]a. You had therefore better desire her to divide it at once; 'tis very fine, & the only present this country affords worth sending which I beg my dear dear sister to accept with the warmest affection of her Brother & Friend

THOS. WILL[IA]M MOORE

Mrs. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Mrs. A. Ridgely
Dover]

Ann replied to this letter from Eden Hill.

August 10th 1787

My very Dear Brother

I had for a long time supposed my self entirely forgotten by you, and it is impossible for me to describe the real pleasure I felt on the rec't of your letter, w[hic]h convinc'd me I was too hasty in my doubts of your regard, and still happy enough to retain a share in your affections . . .

I have been one of the happiest women in the world; I knew no wish ungratified, I had the best, the tenderest, most affectionate of Husbands. . . . I have five very clever Children, three Girls, and Two boys, and they are all very genteelly provided for. My two eldest girls, Williamina and Mary, send, by this opportunity, a pincushion each. Willy begs her Aunt Moore will be pleased to accept of the black Sattin one, it has nothing to recommend it only that it is her own work, and she hopes it will be received as a small token of her affection. Polly begs her Cousin Willy will wear the white Sattin one for her sake—they are neither of them so well done as they should have been, for they work'd in a great hurry. My youngest darling, Nancy, is a sweet little prattling creature, only three years old. She was prevail'd on to take a dose of Ipecacuana the other day, on condition that I should write you word that she was a good child & she reminded me of it often since—let this excuse my writing in so foolish a manner. Harry and

George are fine little Boys, and go to school ev'ry day, one is 8 the other 6 years old.

My sons that are grown up are all three very affectionately attentive to me; they are very respectable—more so I think than almost any young fellows of their ages that I ever met with. Charles has the most amiable disposition in the world no son (not even you my Dear Brother) could be more tender to his own mother than he has ever been to me. He talks of taking a Trip to N[ova] Scotia before Long, and as he was bred to trade would wish to take something with him that might serve to bear his expenses. I would wish to know what you suppose would bear the best market with you. Tell your Daughter Rachel that he was laughing the other day and said he hoped if he did go that he should have the pleasure of seeing his old sweet heart. I intend by the first opportunity to send to Philad[elphi]a for my share of the fish you were so kind as to send, and for w[hi]ch at present it is not in my power to make any return except thanks. If I live till the Fall I hope to be able to send you some part of the production of my farm, or orchards, w[hi]ch may prove as agreeable to you as the Salmon to me—if I can I shall be satisfied, for you could not have sent anything more acceptable, except your Letter, but that was to me invaluable. Tell Mrs. Moore, Willy and all your family that I long to see them. Beg them to write to me, wish Billy and Willy joy of their children for me. You are very proud my D[ea]r Brother of your 3 Grand children—may you be as happy in seeing your G[rea]t Gr[an]dchildren. May Heaven bless you in every respect. Write to me again soon and as often as possible and believe me your truly affectionate Sister,

A. Ridgely

From week to week the shallops that plied between Philadelphia and Dover brought many a parcel to Eden Hill dispatched from Williamina Cadwalader, Ann Ridgely's niece, who must have spent countless hours buying everything the family at Eden Hill could need, such as beaver bonnets, tambour for gowns, red morocco shoes, whole outfits for summer excursions, as well as silver mugs, and tea pots, hogsheads of Madeira wine, wax candles, spices, and even tombstones.

Ann wrote to "Mrs. Cad," in July, 1790, "Harvest is just beginning—

I fear it will be some time before any shallops will go up, as getting in the grain will employ everybody here till all is secured. As most of our shallopmen have farms of their own, we are generally a month at least at this season, deprived of the opportunity of sending that way to Philadelphia."

Perhaps no one was as understanding of Ann Moore Ridgely's problems as her niece Williamina Cadwalader. Because many of her letters are in the correspondence of Eden Hill, it is fitting to explain something of her background.

She was a daughter of Williamina Moore, Ann Ridgely's sister, and of Phineas Bond, a prominent physician of Philadelphia. It happened that Charles Ridgely studied medicine under Phineas Bond. At the time Charles was a student, however, Williamina Cadwalader was but a child. She married General John Cadwalader in 1779, five years after her aunt's marriage to Charles Ridgely. Although aunt and niece, there was not a decade's difference in their ages and they became widows within a few months of each other. These circumstances drew them together. Their life patterns were, however, very different. Ann lived near Dover, the small capital of Delaware, and Williamina in the center of Philadelphia society. Her husband had been captain of a Philadelphia military organization in his youth and later, as a General of Pennsylvania militia, had rendered distinguished aid to General Washington at the time of the battle of Trenton, when he led fifteen hundred men to the assistance of the Commander-in-Chief. He was throughout a champion of Washington. At the time of his death his family was residing in Shrewsbury Parish near Chestertown, Maryland. Soon after the General died his widow returned to her old home, Philadelphia, to be near her parents and there to bring up her son Thomas and her daughter Frances.

As the Ridgely girls grew older they were sent to school in Philadelphia. Williamina was the first to arrive. She had been at school in Chestertown, but transferred to Mrs. Brodeau's in Philadelphia. "Mrs. Cad" was acting as her chaperon and indeed as a second mother. In writing to the child's mother, she assured her on one occasion that Williamina had a warm flannel petticoat, and that she was in fact wearing it.

Your daughter is asleep at my side. I wish now as she must go home that you had her safe with you. It is one in the morning and I am not well which must excuse my writing you a long letter.

Yours sincerely,
W.C.

She mentioned having bought her a white muff and tippet and a hat. The items are given:

"Muff and Tippet	3£ 15s.
Hat	8s 4d
	1s 6d to be added to your account."

She was also exercised about her choice of clothes. "The Lace you sent her is pretty but I wish you would send enough for a pair of Bobbins, a yard and a quarter would do. What she has just serves for her Neck." She added that she had sent the accounts for the goods shipped by the Shallop and "I hope you got your things safe. I am just going to drink Tea out of town with Mrs. Smith, Miss Oswald that was, so must bid you adieu,

Yours sincerely,
WILLIAMINA CADWALADER."

Two letters from Ann Moore Ridgely to Williamina Cadwalader in the fall of 1789 and early summer of 1790, discuss practical subjects such as purchases of children's clothing, weather, and fashion, along with more serious matters relating to Willy's education, and Ann's ideals for her children. The second contains perhaps the frankest expression we have of her admiration for her departed husband.

The two patterns of Cotton for Polly, 6 y[ar]ds in each, came safely by hand by Mr. Buckmaster, and are both made up most beautifully, by Hetty, into Jackets and Petticoats with long sleeves. I w[oul]d have been glad to have taken the black and white stripe for myself as I did not think it proper for a child, but she was so much in love with it that I had it made for her, and you cannot imagine how clever she looks in it. The Pink Stormont is

beautiful and I think it very cheap. The linnen you sent for Body Linings is the best and cheapest for the purpose that I ever saw and I am much obliged to you for sending it, I should have desired it when I wrote but it never entered my head.

My son Nick tells me you have got flannel for under coats for Willy. I am glad to hear it, because I w[oul]d wish her always to be provided with warm clothes before the weather is cold enough to make them absolutely necessary. At present it seems as if the weather w[oul]d continue warm for sometime longer, but really we had such a sudden change, in August from extreme heat to very damp and chilly that I put cloth waistcoats and trousers on my boys and flannel petticoats on my two girls and myself and have had a little fire every Even[in]g and every morn[in]g, 'till today, and I do believe that no body in such a place as this is, can be healthy if they are not as careful in such matters as I am.

I am perfectly well satisfied with the plan you propose for Willy's work —I did not wish her to do any kind of plain work at Mrs. Brodeau's school, but I am very anxious that she should learn to darn well and I hope she will be taught that.

Reading, writing, Arithmetic and Grammar I have more at heart for her than any thing else, and I beg and entreat that you will often put her in mind of these, and the advantages that they must be of to her if she lives. I'm sure both you and I have reason to know that those branches of Education are such as ought never to be neglected, for tho' I most sincerely hope neither of our Dear Girls may ever be unfortunate enough to experience such a change of circumstances as we have done, yet it is certainly our Duty to do every thing in our power to render them as happy as possible in any situation that may fall to their Lot, and a useful education is, in my humble opinion, the best means of making them so.

I can readily excuse the first page of your last letter, for, as you say, I do indeed know what you have felt, and this time two years I was, for thirteen weeks, in exactly in the same situation you were in as it was possible. In all that time I remember well, that I never saw the sun rise or set but what I look'd at it as for the last time that it was to rise or set for me. For several weeks, I was perfectly satisfied and rather happy than otherwise at the thought of the change I expected, but one day—I never shall forget it, I happened to look around my room and at the same instant saw everyone of

my Dear Orphans, silent as death, looking steadfastly on me, their dear eyes swimming in tears. I never felt such an agony before—I desired they might all leave me, and I did every thing in my power to forget them, but it c[oul]d not be; I became oblivious and for three days, I thought I was a vessel out at sea and that I had five anchors thrown over that kept me from moving—I believe there never was a creature more wretched than I was—but at last I came to myself and call'd for my only cares (my Dearest comforts now). The thought of their being separated and of falling perhaps into the hands of mercenary, cruel or at best careless people roused me. I took Bark. I was carried down stairs every day, and laid on a couch in the common room. I rode out, when going only a hundred yards was almost too much for me—I drank porter, and Port wine, tho' I detested both, and by these means, unexpectedly indeed to everybody that had seen me, I recovered. If it is the will of Heaven to enable me to become a useful Guardian to my Dear Children I shall always be thankful for the time w[hi]ch may be added to my life, but if I am not permitted to be in some degree a Blessing to them, I'm sure it w[oul]d be much happier for me to be released from this gloomy vale for I am sure in my own mind that when ever I do leave it, I shall be reunited to their Dear, their amiable father, and as I think of him now as the Guardian Angel of us all, I shall then be his happy assistant and we will both together attend our Darling Children.

God almighty Bless you my Dear Willy and grant that you may be a blessing to your children and that they may fully reward your affectionate and anxious heart for every care and pain you have ever suffered for them. May they like your self be ready "to join their Mother against the whole world if there should be occasion for it, and answer for her integrity with their lives." You cannot imagine how much I love you for this—the strength of your expressions delight me, and I do really believe you would do as much as you say, but let me beg you will be assured that I have not a single doubt of your Dear Mother's integrity remaining . . .

While Willy Ridgely was at school at Mrs. Brodeau's in Philadelphia, her mother wrote an anxious note to Mrs. Cadwalader. It tells of an influenza epidemic at a date earlier than the first recorded by Delaware physicians.

Nov[embe]r 3d [17]89

I have just been informed that Philad[elphi]a and Wilmington are both full as much, or even more, unhealthy than this County. What shall I do ab[ou]t my Dear Child! My own family Thank God has escaped hitherto—but the Town and Country all round us is filled with this dreadful Influenza. Can it attack the same person more than once? and are you sure my Child and your dear Mother have had it? Let me know how you all do. I never heard of people's dying so fast in this neighborhood as at this time—a month or two ago it seemed as if all the Children were to be taken away and now grown people go faster than they did. Don't let my Dear Willy see this letter. If Mrs. Brodeau's house is unhealthy pray let my child be removed to a healthy one if possible—I never shall begrudge any expense that can be an advantage to her. Pray write to me and if my Dear Willy is well tell her to write by first opportunity. May God Almighty Bless and preserve you.

A. R.

June 23rd, 1790

My Dear Madam:

I fully intended to have sent you a sum of money by my Sister Smith but my Son Nicholas, in whose hands it lay, was then so much indisposed that I c[oul]d not think of puting him to the trouble of even count[in]g it. I w[oul]d not have you a single day without cash for the use of my child on any acc[oun]t and I really begin to fear you have very little, if any, of hers by you at present. I am in hopes Nick will be in Philad[elphi]a in a few days and therefore shall not send money by the Shallop. If he sh[oul]d not go I shall perhaps meet with some other safe hand and will send you as much as I think will be necessary to supply her 'till she returns home in November.

I am delighted with the hopes of meeting my D[ea]r Willy a healthy, unaffected good girl. She loves you and shows the same respect to your opinion she would to that of the tenderest parent—if you love either her or me I beg, as the most particular fav[o]r, that you will be so good as to give her a few lessons: guard her against affectation; picture it to her in its ugliest form, and make her dread the least appearance of it; let her shun it as she would a rattlesnake. I hope she is free from anything of the kind—pray let me know whether you discover anything like it in her. I love

her at present above all things in this world except her Brothers and Sisters, but I really am afraid I should hate her if she was to return home poisoned with affectation—when she left this place every Body loved her. I expect when she returns she will meet her neighbors as she used to do with unaffected good nature and complaisance. Everybody inquires for her with an affectionate kindness. I inform them that I hear she is the picture of health, that she has not been troubled with the Jaundice since she has been at Philadelphia. Her friends are pleased with this account; they expect pleasure in meeting her when she returns but if she was to return with a face as fair as a Lilly and Cheeks like a new blown Rose, [and] one single spark of pride or affectation c[oul]d be discovered in her whole composition, she would lose entirely the good opinion of everybody here,—and tho' a very fine *lady* might think that a loss of no kind of consequence, I sh[oul]d feel very unhappy on such an occasion. People here almost ador'd Dr. Ridgely; they used to say—and I still *do* say, "he had no pride—he w[oul]d stop and speak to every person he met with the same good nature and complaisance that he did to his friends." Truly then, if my children love me they will pattern after their Dear Father's character—they will live in every respect as he did. They were happy in having such a Father, for, in every character he filled in life, he set a most excellent example.

I am in hopes Peggy will soon return and by her I shall have the pleasure of hearing from you and if she did not leave Philad[elphi]a before Monday, I expect she will be able to inform me that my Sister got home safe last Sunday. I really am anxious to hear from her. She did not travell as I w[oul]d do, if I had it as much in my power as she has. I am sorry she sent my horses back before she got home. She sh[oul]d have been very welcome to have made use of them the whole way and I sh[oul]d have insisted on it if I had not thought the horse Dr. Smith was to meet her with was one used to go, occasionally, in her Carriage.

Give my love to your Children, and to your Mamma and Sisters, and believe me your ever affectionate

and much obliged Aunt

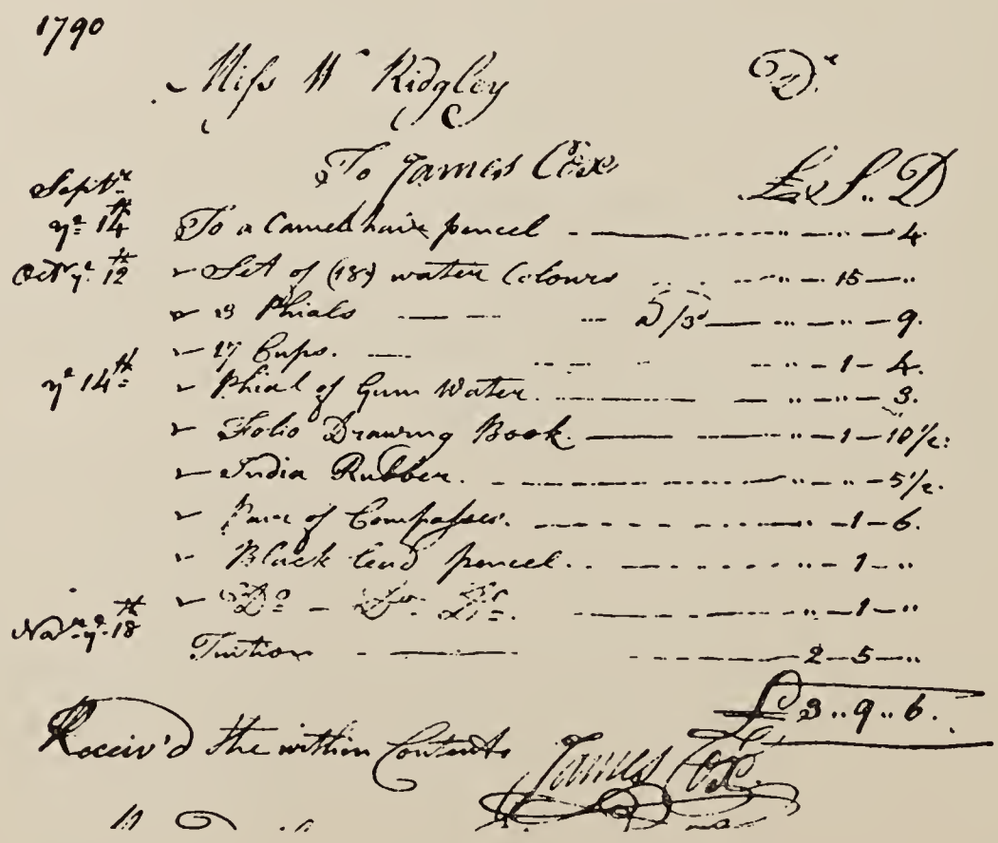
A. R.

The three foregoing letters are not in the Ridgely Collection in the Delaware Archives. They are items of the Cadwalader Collection in the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

The sister referred to by Mrs. Charles Ridgely was Rebecca Moore, wife of the Reverend William Smith, D.D., to whom she had been married in 1758. Her husband was the first provost of the Academy of Philadelphia, now the University of Pennsylvania. He broke with the trustees in disagreements over religious and educational policies, and removed to Chestertown, Maryland, where he founded Washington College. He returned, however, to Philadelphia and established his family in a house at the Falls of Skuylkill.

Two of the daughters of Rebecca Moore and William Smith appear in the Ridgely correspondence: Williamina, who married Charles Goldsborough of Maryland's Eastern Shore in 1783, and was the mother of the "Sallie" so often mentioned, and Rebecca, who married Samuel Blodgett, Jr., Esq. in 1792. The Blodgetts had several children who, with their parents, are alluded to frequently in the letters of the 1790's.

Below is an account of some school expenses of this year.



1790

Miss W. Ridgely Dr.

To James Cox

		£	S.	D.
Sept. 14th	To a Camel hair pencil			4
Oct. 12th	Set of (18) water Colours		15	
	3 Phials 5/3			9
	17 Cups		1	4
14th	Phial of Gum Water			3
	Folio Drawing Book		1	10½
	India Rubber			5½
	Pair of Compasses		1	6
	Black lead pencil		1	
	Do. – Do.		1	
Nov. 18th	Tuition	2	5	
		£3	9	6

Receiv'd the within Contents James Cox

The devotion of Ann's family prompted them to urge her repeatedly to remove from Dover and make her home nearer Philadelphia. It would seem from a letter of April, 1789, written by Thomas May from Wilmington, that she had gone so far as to contemplate this move.

Wilmington 20th April 1789

Dear Mrs. Ridgely

I was in hopes that I could by this time have given you some information relative to a Plantation; but the one I had in view belonged to a Mark Elliot late Dec'd, (Intestate) who left so many children to share in it, that I expected they must have sold it to make the Dividend however it seems they have a mind to keep it sometime longer, its a Tavern on the Road to Phila. about two miles from our Market House.

If you could reconcile living in Town & purchasing a farm within a convenient distance & keep an Overseer to manage it under your Direction, I think a good one may be had, altho do not know of one at present, for I think it will be difficult to procure one that will suit you near enough to live upon and send the children to school at same time.

However, I shall not neglect to keep a good look out and if anything offers within the distance that you have hitherto mentioned shall certainly advise you of it, and if you can think of adopting the other Plan and advise me of it I will make the necessary Enquiry.

Since the weather has moderated Mrs. May is Entirely Relieved from her Rheumatic Complaints and is Restored to as good a State of Health as usual and now joyns in Best Wishes for the Health and Hapiness of Mrs. Ridgely and children

and Rest assured I am as Ever
Your Most Humble Serv[an]t
Thos. May

Gen. Washington lodged in town last night and this morning about sunrise sett off for Phila. & New York attended by a number of the Gentlemen of this place to the line of the State where he will be met by the City Light Horse etc., etc.

At the end of 1791, Ann Ridgely received a letter from young Edward Miller asking her for an interview. It is not possible to assert the

reason for his request, but on reading letters between other members of the Ridgely family over a number of years, it is to be presumed that this young man wished to marry her daughter, Williamina. His father was a distinguished Presbyterian minister, at that time pastor of the Dover Church. He was responsible for the dignified church building erected on Meeting House Square in 1791.

Edward Miller would seem to have been all that Ann could desire for her child. He made an enviable record in medicine. After removing to the city of New York he became a prominent and honored physician and citizen and held civic positions of trust.

Although an engagement, apparently entered into several years after the date of this note from Mr. Miller, did exist between the couple, no marriage took place, due perhaps to Ann's opposition.

Madam

Having waited, a considerable time, in vain, for the casual occurrence of an opportunity to address to you some particular conversation, I now beg leave to solicit the favor of a private interview for that purpose. And to avoid unnecessary delay, I would propose to wait on you tomorrow afternoon, if it be convenient to you to be then, for a short time disengaged.

I am farther induced to make this interview a matter of special request, as, in that case, I shall incur no hazard of incommoding your family, by any unexpected arrangements for this occasion.

With perfect respect, I am, Madam

Your most obedient
& most humble servant
EDWARD MILLER

Dover 20 Dec[embe]r 1791

In the winter of 1792, Mary Ridgely (Polly) was at school at Mrs. Brodeau's in Philadelphia, while her sister, Williamina, was visiting her cousin, Mrs. Travis, "Mrs. Cad's" sister Betsy. Polly seems to have been a bit difficult. Hers was the most independent spirit among the Ridgely children, and she was given to expressing herself freely in and out of season. In some manner she seems to have ruffled Mrs. Cadwalader's feathers. At least that is what we gather from the following letter, written to Polly's mother in the spring of 1792.

D[ea]r Madam

I rec[eive]d yours by Mr. Ridgely this Even[in]g, and from what he says it is probable I may not see Willy, as he talks of going off very early in the morn[in]g. We all lose her with great regret but Betsy at present will feel her absence most sensibly. I shall never be satisfied till I am sure you are not offended—which by your Letter I have great reason to think—and I do assure you upon my honor that there is nothing you could wish done that it would not give me the greatest pleasure on Earth to do for you. Your children, with only your directions about them, I could attend Night and Day, but I have an anxious mind and could never be easy to have the care of a young person who I had no right to control and yet could not see them do wrong without speaking at least; after this let me do Polly justice and say that from 1st to last of her stay she treated me with politeness & affection. I often spoke to her of trifles, but had never any one serious thing to mention—unless she will let me say that I was really angry at her caprice at the last—and almost as much so at Willy for indulging her, but it is over and Willy will soon be with her Friends. I hope you have by this time got all your things safe by Mr. Wild. As the Trunk &cc. went from Mrs. Brodeau's, I was oblig'd to trust the packing altogether to Polly & I quake for the bowls; let me hear of their arrival.

I have late as it is drawn off your acc[oun]ts but as Mrs. Brodeaus' acc[oun]t only came today I have not paid it but if Mr. Ridgely does not leave town tomorrow you shall have it. You will also see some other accounts unsettled if he does not stay. Is it worth while to ask Doct[or] Rush for his acc[oun]t; he paid Polly I believe 3 visits here. You will be able to judge nearly how we stand which I have not time to do nor shall not for a fortnight to come.

Tommy continues better. I have no thought of going to N. H. but to Bethlehem for a time and then return and spend the summer near enough to see Tom every week at least. I am trying to rent Abel James' place on the Frankfort Road for the summer.

Love to all. Let me hear as soon as possible how Willy gets home—I do not like the Plan.

Your very affectionate
W.C.

The 1st moment I can go out I will call at Callaghans and try if he cannot be coax'd now out of his Tea. As it is near the time the East Indiamen are

expected he may like to clear off what he has on hand, and I know there has been none so good bought for years as his.
Wednesday Night.
Thursday Willy has just sent me a note to say Adieu.

In June, 1792, Rebecca Smith was married. She was the daughter of William Smith and Rebecca Moore, a sister of Mrs. Charles Ridgely. As usual the description of the wedding came to Eden Hill Farm through Williamina Cadwalader. In describing the wedding, "Mrs. Cad" said, that the bride was dressed in a sprigged muslin chemise and that the bridesmaids wore chemises also. By this I think she meant the low-necked dress with a straight skirt and the waist just under the armpits, so much in vogue at the time.

This letter is not part of the Public Archives Commission's Ridgely Collection, but is quoted from Horace Wemyss Smith's biography[1] of his grandfather, William Smith. It is undoubtedly one of a number we know Mr. Smith borrowed from Ann Ridgely duPont's collection of Moore-Ridgely correspondence, while his book was in preparation.

Philadelphia June 20, 1792

My dear Aunt: What shall I say to the girls about the bride, Becky Smith's dress. She was dressed in a sprig'd muslin chemise, and wore a bonnet with a curtain. The young ladies, her bridesmaids, had also on chemises, but their hats ornamented. Did I write you that Miss Ann Hamilton, Miss Meade, and Miss Keppele were her attendants; and that she left town the Saturday following, and saw nobody on Friday. There was great propriety both in her behavior and in all other respects. Every thing was as it ought to be, without any affectation or parade. For our sweet girls I can only tell you, that they were the most interesting creatures I ever saw, and that they were dressed in white muslin, without any thing on their heads but a white ribbon run through the hair. There was a monstrous company—forty-seven people at supper. That was perfectly elegant in every respect, and not even a whisper or joke that could have raised

[1] Horace Wemyss Smith, *Life & Correspondence of the Reverend William Smith, D.D.*, Philadelphia, 1879; Vol. II, p. 350.

a blush in a vestal. The young men's delicacy and propriety to their wives charmed me. They did not venture to speak or look at them the whole evening any further than that Archibald McCall spoke to Betsy, and Tom Ringold to Maria. They had not seen them for ten days before the wedding . . . .

Yours affectionately,
W. CADWALADER

To Mrs. Ann Ridgely, near Dover.

The untiring "Mrs. Cad" wrote her aunt again during June giving her an account of purchases she had made.

My D[ea]r Mad[a]m,

I can only spare time to tell you that I rec[eive]d your letter yesterday with two Guineas inclos'd & that Polly has gone out for the stockings. I do not know whether I shall have time to settle the acc[oun]t but if not you shall have it next oppor[tunit]y. Mr. Travers has procured a light waggon to take us all to Germantown this afternoon, and I expect them every moment. The letters were bro[ugh]t late yesterday when we were going to Mr. Meredith's where the children had a dance. My children wear cotton stockings the year through and I send you the same. I think them as warm in winter as worsted, and by constant use they are not disagreeable in summer. 4 p[ai]rs lasts a year and on every acc[oun]t I prefer them.

Polly is just come home—Tom wears no other than these sort which are the genteelest stockings Boys can have.

		£/		
4 pr. large stockings at 6/			4	0
4 pr. dit[t]o second size at 4/6			18	0
2 pr. dit[t]o small ----- 4/			8	
		2	10	0
Change due me -----			13	2
		3	3	2

Rec'd of Mrs. R.	3	10	
Paid out and due Mrs. C.	3	3	2
		6	10

For the 6 . . 10 change I send you two y[ar]ds of muslin, the cheapest I ever saw—the carriage waits.

Elizabeth Freeman was mentioned not infrequently in letters from Dover and Philadelphia. One of her own to Ann Ridgely, sent to the care of Mrs. Cadwalader from London, June 14, 1793, is interesting chiefly because of its description of her purchase of a wax doll for Nancy Ridgely. An extract from it follows.

London June 14, 1793

My dear Madam

. . . I send you an account of the money laid out; I have purchased a wax baby for Nancy that opens & shuts its eyes by pulling a wire—it was 2/6 sterling which is just equal to 4/2 currency. . . .

ELIZABETH FREEMAN

[*Addressed to* Mrs. A. Ridgely
to the care of Mrs. Cadwalader
Union Street
Philadelphia
George Barclay.]

Mrs. Ridgely wrote to "Mrs. Cad" of the very poor schools in Dover and the necessity of sending her sons away to be educated. "My dear Boys go to our English Master about a half mile from my door—they have not yet been with him a Quarter. I fear he is but a poor kind of teacher, but they improve tolerably fast in writing. I think if we all live till next summer, I shall be obliged to send the poor fellows to a distant school, but where I know not yet."

Ann seems to have put off the evil day, for this was written in 1790 or 1791, and the following letters, addressed to Mr. William Thompson, Newark, Delaware, are dated January and March, 1794.

Kent County, Jan[ua]ry 30th 1794

Sir,

I have two Sons, one in his Fifteenth and the other in his thirteenth year, that I wish much to place under your care and tuition at Newark.

As they have never yet been from home I confess I feel all the anxiety natural to a Mother on the thought of part[in]g with them, but, if it sh[oul]d be convenient to you and Mrs. Thompson to receive them into y[ou]r family that anxiety will be much abated as I shall, from the character I have repeatedly heard of you both, be very sure that they will be carefully attended to—I mean with respect to their behaviour, the company they may keep, and the regularity of their hours of rising and going to bed. They have not been spoiled by indulgence—if I judge rightly—but, as mothers are s[ai]d to be always blind to their Children, perhaps I err. You Sir, If you take them into your family, will be better able to decide whether they have or not, and you cannot lay a greater or more last[in]g obligation on me, than by correct[in]g in them everything that you may see amiss.

Mr. Gardener was kind enough, when his Brothers went up last, to write to you in order to know whether you c[oul]d take my children. He has since inform'd me that he did not receive an answer, and supposes that his serv[an]t must have lost your letter. I took the liberty of request[in]g Mr. Gardner to let you know that I w[oul]d cheerfully and punctually remit the am[oun]t of schooling, board, etc. on the same terms that he pays for his Brother, and also that if it w[oul]d be more convenient to you I w[oul]d send a Bed, Bedstead, etc. for my sons. I lament the loss of every day they are from school. I must entreat you to let me have an answer to this letter by the very first opport[unit]y, w[hi]ch will oblige Sir,

Your H[um]ble Servant,
Ann Ridgely

March 3, 1794

Sir,

This you will receive by my Sons. I am much oblig'd and gratified by your consenting to take them into your family, and most sincerely hope that their behaviour will be such as may merit your approbation.

I acknowledge myself an anxious and tender mother, and have often been laugh'd at by my best friends for the uncommon attention I have ever paid to my children, but, Sir, permit me to say that it has been so entirely the wish of my heart to render them worthy members of society that I have carefully guarded against improper indulgences of every kind, and I entreat you, while they are under your care, to assist me in the arduous task

of instilling into their young minds such principles as may happily tend to gratify my fondest hopes by rendering them virtuous, useful and respected.

I shall inclose you a small bill as it is probable a Book or two may be necessary that they have not with them. It may also happen that some other matters may be wanted that I cannot at present think of, and tho' I do not approve of spending money unnecessarily, I should be sorry that they sh[oul]d, even for an hour, be at a loss for anything that *you* may think is really so.

Be pleas'd to present my compliments to Mrs. Thomson and tell her that I beg she will take upon her to chide my Boys whenever they deserve it.

I shall be much oblig'd if you w[oul]d be so good as to let them know whenever there is an opport[unit]y of writing to me and if you will be pleas'd to desire them not to omit doing it if they have leisure.

I am S[i]r, with much respect
Y[ou]r oblig'd
A. Ridgely

Inclos'd is a Bank Bill
of 10 Dollars

P.S. If either of my D[ea]r Boys sh[oul]d be ill (w[hi]ch Heaven grant may not be the case) I entreat you to let me know it as soon as possible. They have hitherto been happy enough to enjoy, generally, very good health. I am ignorant of what Physicians may be in your neighbourhood, if it sh[oul]d be necessary at any time to apply to one for them, I must leave the choice to you.

[*Addressed to* Mr. William Thomson
Newark
c/o Henry M. Ridgely]

In 1794 the young people at Eden Hill Farm were growing rapidly out of childhood. Williamina, at nineteen, was already a tall, attractive young lady; Mary, now seventeen, was forthright and a bit angular. Ann, the youngest, was a comfortably chubby person of ten whose fat little figure distressed her mother. She confided to her sister, Mrs.

Phineas Bond, in Philadelphia, "I hope her figure will grow genteeler as she grows older."

These girls were taught the arts of housekeeping, including spinning and weaving, plain sewing and fine needlework, and activities essential to plantation living. When the boys, Henry and George, were sent away to Newark to school the girls mourned their departure. They looked up to Henry as a hero and demanded of him a hero's behaviour, frequently giving him sage advice in their letters. Brother George was Ann's beloved companion, only a little older than she. They romped together and shared the love of dogs, ponies, even kittens, and perhaps enjoyed the lowing of cattle and the grunt of pigs. In short, they were typical farm children of that time, happy over a series of years at Eden Hill.

When their father, Charles, was a lad, the Bay was the highway, and trips to Philadelphia were usually made by shallop, but during the years between 1750 and 1800 roads were gradually developed. Before the 1790's stage coaches were making regular trips from Lewes at the Cape through Dover to Wilmington and on to the nation's capital, Philadelphia. In spite of better roads a journey by carriage was still an adventure, as may be seen in the following letter.

Newark, Delaware
March 5th 1794

Dear Mother

We have arrived safe, after a great deal of Trouble. We came to Black Bird very well, after we had come on about two miles from there, the Little Horse gave out, and if it had not been for Mr. Carity, I do nott know whether we should have been here in two days or not. We put his Horse in the Cariage and caried it three or four miles; at Middletown we had to hire a horse and come on horse back. Carity lent John Wild Three Dollars.

Your affectionate
H. M. Ridgely

P.S.
I have lent John Wild a French Crown.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
near Dover]

March 9, 1794

My dear George,

I am sorry you had such cold bad weather for your journey but I hear that a little Ginn Toddy kept up your spirits and made you as merry as a cricket—indeed my son, if ever such drink is necessary it must have been so at the time you took it.

I wish you had written to me by Jeffery. I cannot help fearing that you were very much fatigued; if that had not been the case I think you w[oul]d have written a line or two.

My pen is so bad I can hardly write with it at all, and my eyes are so dim and my knife so dull that I cannot make another, yet I must tell you we are all well, and what is more all of us love you and y[ou]r Brother in a greater degree than you perhaps supposed. We seem solitary without you. The Dogs, let the weather be ever so bad, go halfway down the lane and with seeming impatience look out and wait for you ev'ry Even[in]g. They have by this token of affection to my sons become favorites with the whole family and are carefully fed and caress'd almost as often as when you were here to do it yourself.

Cyrus, you know, is an impudent little creature. The night after you left home he came in as if he had forgot you were gone, and after standing a little while said he came for Mas Harry and Mas George's shoes to clean, and several times Frank cry'd out for one or the other of you to bring out the Guns and shoot Ducks.

Write to me by ev'ry opportunity. Nothing will give me so much pleasure as hearing that you are both well and happily situated, and pray my D[ea]r Boy be as attentive as possible to your Books. Write a copy ev'ry day if you have time, and you will, with a little care, soon find great improvement. I send you a Ball—'tis a very good bouncer. Let me know if you like it.

I have heard of nothing new since you left us except that a poor little negro child belonging to Wm. Lockerman was drown'd on Friday morn[in]g. Your Lamb is well and thrives finely—we have got one of a dun color. As the weather is now fine and seems settled I hope we shall be able to raise all that we may have this season.

Heaven Bless you my son,

Y[ou]r affectionate Mother

A. Ridgely

Read Harry's letter and let him
read this, for whenever I write I w[oul]d
desire both the letters to be read by
each of you.

Mrs. Ridgely's carefully kept accounts contain this list of the articles sent to Newark for the boys' use.

March 1794

Sent to Mr. Thomson's at Newark for the use of my sons:
1 Bed, Bolster, & 2 pillows, all of narrow striped ticking
1 Bedstead Sacking bottom, Cord & 8 screws for D[itt]o
1 Blue & white Callico Bed-quilt
2 large Blankets
2 p[ai]r of Russia Sheets
2 p[ai]r of coarse Muslin pillow cases
They have also
12 shirts, 6 mark'd H. M. Ridgely & 6 mark'd G. W. Ridgely
4 half handkerchiefs to wear at night instead of caps, 2 mark'd for each of them.
6 Pocket hankerchiefs 3 marked for each of them
12 cravats, 6 for each mark'd as above

Each of them has four pair of stockings that are much worn but I hope soon to send them a new supply. They have also 2 jackets & 2 p[ai]r of Breeches each, each one common coat and a Surtout, a linnen Bag to put their dirty cloathes in when they change them, w[hi]ch has tape strings & sh[oul]d be hung up in their chamber.

A p[ai]r of Shoe brushes & a brush for their Hats and Cloaths. Each has a New Hat and each an old one w[hi]ch as soon as they are new dressed shall be sent up.

They have a number of Latin and Greek Books, a Testament, Prayer Book, & the Art of Speaking (in English) If any Books sh[oul]d be necessary that they are not provided with Mr. Thomson is requested to supply them if in his power, at least till I can do it

Mrs. Ann Ridgely: Account for sons Henry M. Ridgely & Geo. W. Ridgely, aged 15 & 13 yrs.

In May, Ann Ridgely again wrote to Mr. Thomson, now her son's preceptor.

10th May 1794

Sir,

I am happy in finding that my Sons are much pleas'd with their situation at Newark. This must be in a great measure, owing to the kind and friendly attention they have received in your family, and I cannot let them return without beging that you and Mrs. Thomson will accept my thanks for your goodness to them, but let me entreat you Sir not to let your indulgence lead you to suffer either of my boys to be absent from your House later of an Even[in]g than you would choose one of your own of their ages sh[oul]d be. I fear you will think me a troublesome correspond[en]t, for I must entreat you also to inquire into their conduct and conversation without doors, and the company they may associate with. I am happy in think[in]g that they are far from being viciously inclin'd, but, they are young—their minds are at present susceptable of impressions that may be as lasting as their existence. If virtues are not planted, vices may, and probably will, take root. Excuse me—remember that I am their only parent—let the weakness of a woman, the fears of a mother plead for me. Advise them, caution them as you would do your own and, if they are faulty, chide them in like manner. They will, if they live, remember it, and Honour you the more for it, at a future time, and, it will be doing me the greatest fav[o]r.

Before Harry Ridgely left Dover he was beginning to learn the Greek Language. Whether it was proper that he sh[oul]d have been so or not I cannot judge but Mr. Johnston, his tutor at the time, thought so. I leave this matter to you. I can only say that I wish my Sons sh[oul]d be good scholars and that as they are both to study some profession I would wish that their school education should be finished as soon as they can attain a perfect knowledge of the Languages. Harry will be fifteen the 6th day of Aug[us]t next and his Brother is not quite 20 months younger. By this you will be able to judge how necessary it is for them to be diligent and to employ their time to the best advantage.

I have inquired the price of Feathers, as my children s[ai]d Mrs. Thomson wish'd to get some, and I find there is none that is good to be sold here under 2/9 per lb. and that, if they are very good, is as cheap as I ever knew them to be. If Mrs. Thomson will have them at that price I will purchase for her and beg she will let me know the quantity and what they are to be inclos'd in and how forwarded to Newark.

A. Ridgely

This to the boys from their anxious mother.

It is now so long since I have heard from you my Dear Sons that I begin to be very anxious a[bou]t you. Never have I rec[eive]d a line from you since Mr. Montgomery came down, last month. I'm afraid you will think I have forgot you, but indeed I have made inquiery of everybody I have met with, for an opportunity of writing to Newark, & I now write in order that my letter may be ready for the first that can be heard of. If a good hand sh[oul]d offer I will send each of you a Dollar as y[ou]r allowance for Pocket money for this month, tho' possibly August may be here before this goes to you, and if so I shall have 2 to send to each. If that sh[oul]d be the case I must recommend it to you my children not to be too lavish in spending your cash because it is flush, especially in indulging your apetites in such things as may endanger your health. Pray be careful not to eat great quantities of fruit, particularly be cautious ab[ou]t Pears and apples. Disorders of the stomach and bowels are frequently brought on by excess in these things and often fatal consequences ensue. Remember my happiness depends on the prudent behaviour of my children and on their wellfare. If through the dispensations of Providence we are afflicted with sickness or any other distress, we sh[oul]d, and, if proper attention has been paid to us, even in our infant years, we generally can, bear it with patience and resignation to the Divine Will but, if we suffer calamities by our own misconduct, they are render'd doubly insupportable by self accusation—that is, if the sufferer has sense enough to reflect on his imprudence. I hope my d[ea]r children will never be so blind to their good as to suffer themselves to do anything that they think wrong. Give my respectful compliments to Mr. & Mrs. Thomson. I hope soon to hear from you. May God bless and keep you both under the shadow of his mercies & be graciously pleased to

be the Guide, Guardian, comforter and protector of you through life, is the most sincere prayer, my D[ea]r Sons, of

Your ever affectionate & anxious Mother

19th July 1794. A. R.

[*Addressed to* George & Henry Ridgely,
Newark Academy,
Newark, Delaware.
From Mrs. Ann Ridgely, Dover, Delaware.]

The difficulty of having letters and packages delivered produced some real problems both for the boys and their mother. She cautioned George about his allowance.

9th Aug[u]st 1794

I am really affraid my D[ear] Boy that you have been some time oblig'd to carry a very light purse, and I am sure you will be very glad to receive a new recruit of pocket money. I shall inclose you two Dollars—'tis a large sum for you to be possess'd of at one time and I will just remind you that if a part of it (one half at least) is judiciously appropriated to the purchase of some instructive and entertaining Book it may be a source of pleasure and amusement, not only to yourself, but to your friends for a long time to come. If, on the contrary, you spend it in the purchase of cakes, fruit, etc. you will soon lose the pleasure of having ever had it, and may not improbably injure your health by the gratification of your appetite w[hi]ch will certainly occasion very disagreeable reflections in the breast of a Lad of your age, who has so often been caution'd against the indulgence of improper desires of any kind.

I shall not fail sending for you at the time you mention tho' really I fear you will get the ague again on your return. However, possibly it will help you to grow fast and catch y[ou]r Brother Harry by the time you are both grown up.

Your Dogs, Lambs and ev'rything you love are made much of by the whole family, but poor Chance and Tark have both been maul'd by some ill manner'd Dogs lately w[hi]ch has occasion'd them to make but a shabby appearance at present.

Our little Negroes, Anna, Sarah, Jim and Andrew have the hooping cough—all the rest of the family are well.

I beg you will write to me by ev'ry opport[unit]y. I am always anxious about you and tho' I have made inquiry of ev'rybody for an opportunity of writing I have never met with one since Mr. Montgomery went up in June last.

Your Sisters will both write to you soon. They desire their loves. Nancy has got a beautiful little Kitten, almost white, and a great fuss there is with it.

Heaven bless you, my Dear Son,
I am y[ou]r ever affectionate
A. Ridgely

Y[ou]r Brothers and their families are well.

[*Addressed to* George Wemyss Ridgely at Mr. Thomson's
Newark, New Castle County]

At Newark where the boys were "putt" to school, they must have felt very far from home. As a matter of fact the distance was not much more than forty miles, but George particularly gave expression to his longing for the home that seemed so distant, in a letter which he wrote:

Newark October 30, 1794

Dear Madam

My brother and myself are both well at Newark. Take care of the dogs and send up for us next Aprial.

I am yours
George W. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
near Dover
To the care of Mr. Coley.]

His older brother did not express his emotion in a letter of the same date, but described the catastrophe of a broken spring and harness on the journey to Newark:

Newark, October 30th 1794

We arrived safe after a great deal of Trouble in the first place we had to stay at Duck Creek until I could get my Boots. When we left there the Schools were let out, and as we were coming slowly along the Carriage went over a little Brige, and Broke one of the Springs, which Mr. Calley and myself tied with one of the rains of the Bridle that belonged to the Carriage, this happened betwixt Duck Creek and Black Bird. After it was mended we started and came on as far as Middletown, where we had the Horses fed and after that we came on to this place and arrived about Dark. Mr. Caley took all the care he could with the carriage, the place where it was broke was a little Brige, which he could not escape, and which he drove over slowly, but all would not do, for what is to be must be.

Yours affectionate
HENRY MOORE RIDGELY

Excuse this writing I have just got up out of bed and expect Mr. Caley will be anxious to go home.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
near Dover]

In the months following, the neighbors carried many messages back and forth between the school and the farm. That George stood in need of instruction is evident from all his letters, but he outdid himself in spelling at his next "opportunity."

Newark Nov 7 1794

Dear Madam I have just heard of an oppertunyty of wrighting to you to let you know that my Brother and my self are both well. I canot teel yo more as Mr. G. is agoing off just now. iamyours

G W R

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
near Dover]

His older brother took pains to describe some of the events which interested him.

Newark November 7th 1794

As Mr. Johnson told me he was going down as far as Duck Creek on Sunday next, and that he would take a Letter, as far as he went and try to get it sent to you as soon as possible, I shall write to you by him, On Thursday the 30th day of October Mr. Black died and was buried on Saturday following. The invitation was, for the people to meet at ten, but the funeral did not go by here until between two and three o'clock in the afternoon; I think there was more people at his funeral than ever I saw at any one's Funeral. His coffin was made out of walnut boards, covered over with black cloath, on the outside, and lin'd with white flannel in the inside. Mr. & Mrs. Johnson are very clever, As Mr. Robert Johnstone who we used to go to school to, is in town and is to go on to Middletown this evening, I cannot take time to alter this letter, and shall send it as it is, you must excuse me as I have to go to school presenly.

Yours affectionately
HENRY M RIDGELY.

Nicholas Ridgely added the following note on the back before the letter reached its destination.

Mr. Johnston who formerly kept school here just now gave me this letter. He will return in a day or two, or more. He says [he] will call to see you before he goes up. The Boys are well.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
near Dover]
Hon[ore]d by
Mr. Johnstone

Nov. 11th 1794

Indeed my D[ea]r Son your letter, tho' one of the shortest that I ever remember to have received, was a very acceptable one to me as ev'ry line w[hi]ch informs me of your wellfare will ever be . . . . Mr. Mingo, who has on many occasions render'd himself famous before, is now in for stealing

corn from us and there are likewise many others for the like offenses. Your dogs are all well and carefully fed ev'ry day.

We have heard from Miss Freeman lately. She is well and very happily settled among her friends; she desires her love to you and Harry. She has sent your Sister Nancy one of the most beautiful little Wax Babies that I ever saw. It can open and shut its Eyes and has just cut its two fore-teeth—it is a very exact representation of a child of ab[ou]t four months' old, only on a small scale. Her eyes are of the finest blue, she is call'd Betsey. Her Mamma and her Aunts were so fond of her that I was affraid they w[oul]d spoil her and I take all the care in my power to prevent it by keep[in]g her as much out of their hands as I can. I think you will admire her when you see her. I shall send you a pair of mittens to keep your hands warm this winter. I finish'd them some days ago, and will have them wrap'd up ready for the first opportunity that may offer . . .

Heaven bless you my D[ea]r Boy—write often to your ever affectionate mother

A. R.

[*Addressed to* George Wemyss Ridgely
at the Rev. Mr. Johnsons'
Newark
New Castle County.]

Newark December 20th 1794

I received your letters, one by Mr. Johnstone, and the other by Mr. Montgomery, in the one you sent by Mr. Johnstone you said you wished I could send a Man that had a good character, to you, for an Overseer, but that is as hard a thing for me to do as anything you could ask, as all the people about here think Dover and the neighbourhood of Dover, one of the worst places in the World for health, and beside that I know of no one about here but has employment. I received the stockings, and George the Mittins you sent by Mr. Johnstone. I suppose Mr. Dachiell will have a large School. We have at present but thirteen scholars but expect more soon. George has been unwell for some days but has got well of every complaint but weakness, he is well enough to write. I expect to send this to New Castle by Mr. McBeath. Mrs. Johnson is at her Father's, she was sent for to see her cousin, of the name of Bohannan, who had her hand

scratched with a pin, and is like to mortify, I have not yet hear'd how she is. I think this strange sort of weather, so near Christmas.

Yours affectionate
HENRY MOORE RIDGELY

Last Wednesday there went by this place about an hundred mules and about forty Jackasses. Tell Polly I have not time to write to her, but she must excuse me.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
near Dover]

That little George really needed assistance from home is evidenced in his letter of December 21, 1794, from Newark. It is to be hoped that his needs were supplied promptly.

Newark December 21th 1794

Dear Madam

I have just of an oppertunity of writing to you. I have been verry sick but am gitting much better. I am verry sorry to hear about Esther. I have not heard any thing of Mr. Thomson and his Family since they have left Newark. I know no news to tell y. Be pleased to send me by the next oppertunity a dozen and half of such buttens as I will enclose they came from Dugals thay are all off of my brichis and thair is non up here. Beleve me yours

GEORGE WEMYSS RIDGELY.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
near Dover]

In a letter written some time previous to this date Ann had spoken of George as her "dear little sloven."

The Esther referred to in the above letter was a servant in the household at Eden Hill.

Dover, January 21, 1795

Some days ago, by Mr. Montgomery, I received your favor, my dear George, which I now intend thanking you for, and indeed that is all I can

do, as I know no news but what Mama and Willy have already written to you. Mr. C. Battle and Miss Many were married on Saturday night. Mr. Jones and Miss Meeks waited on the bride and groom. Her Mother and brother, Mr. and Mrs. Lober, Mr. and Mrs. Warner, Mr. French Battle and Miss Kitty McCall were all that were present.

The people who are fond of *Equality* have been very gay this Christmas, but as for me I can say I never spent so dull a one in my life. I think it must have been for want of enlivening conversation of yourself and Brother H. Don't you think you are of great consequence that your company shou[l]d be essential to the happiness of us all? The welfare of both my Brothers is essential to mine. I beg you not to omit writing to me as often as possible and let your letters be long. I believe you have never heard that brother Abram had another student from Milford—his name is Rolston. I believe he is very clever. Your niece still has the ague at times. At present she is well, as are all of your friends. Dover is very healthy, nor has it been otherwise this Fall or Winter. You must excuse this scrawl as I am by no means in a humor to write. I bid you adieu after wishing ev'ry Blessing may attend you here, and happiness hereafter.

Yours affec[tionate]ly
MARY RIDGELY

Soon after New Year's in 1795, Henry wrote a letter saying how dull their Christmas was compared to what they had when at home, and then asked, as a diversion, to be allowed to read "Pope's Women" as the nights were so long.

Newark, January, 10th 1795

As Mr. Montgomery or Mr. McBeath goes to Dover in a few days, I cannot let them go without sending a letter to you, but it cannot be very long, as I have very little to tell you. Mr. Thomson has been very sick scince he has been at Carlisle, he kept his bed eight or nine days, and Mrs. Thomson has had the ague and fever, and James Thomson fell over a cellar-door and broke three of his ribs, but they are all better. George is quite recovered of his weakness and cough. Mrs. Johnson came home the day Brother N. left this place, and says that her cousin is no better and that the

Doctors says she cannot live long. We had a very dull Christmas to what we have when we are at home. I wish you would send up Pope's Women for us to read this winter, as the nights are so long, and as I wish very much to read them. We have four days holyday at Christmas. If you cannot get to send up our cloaths by a safe opportunity, and chuse it, we can get them here.

Yours affect[ionate]ly,
HENRY MOORE RIDGELY

I was anxious to know how the boys were, & I opened their letters.
Mr. Montgomery just now arrived in town. N.R.

This note was added by Nicholas Ridgely, the boys' half-brother.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
near Dover]
Hon'd by
Thos. Montgomery Esqre.

George, on the same date, had told much the same news, adding an inquiry about his beloved pets and announcing that he had begun "Selecta Profanis," a familiar Latin reader. He had likewise asked for a black coat for the public examination to be held in "Aprial." His mother assured him that this would be forthcoming.

2d February 1795

I have this Instant rip'd up a very fine Black Coat that your Brother Nicholas, unluckily, for Him, happen'd to get made rather too small and of course did not wear it often. I think it will make you a very pretty one, but lest there sh[oul]d not be quite enough to piece out the Sleeves without using the Facings for that purpose, I have put into the Pockets with the Buttons and Staying bits, the facing of another Coat which tho' not quite so fine or of so good a colour will do very well to face your Coat.

I shall send your Brother and you Cloath for New Coats before the

Examination. I hope Mr. Montgomery will be able to find room for the Bundle I have made up, but really I am asham'd to give Him so much trouble as I repeatedly have done since you were at N[ew]ark School.

I shall put two Dollars in this Letter. You must pay the Taylor and get his Bill, with a rec[eip]t on it, and keep it carefully 'till you come Home, that I may, then, file it with other rec[eip]ts.

I am, my dear boy
Yours as ever, A. Ridgely

The brothers finished their studies at Newark and were sent to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where they attended Dickinson College. They were under the care of Mr. Thompson as before.

Delaware State, near Dover,
24th June, 1795

Sir,

This you will receive by my Sons Harry and George Ridgely whom I hope it may be in your power to take into your friendly Family at Carlisle. They were so happy under your care and Tuition at Newark that neither they or myself can bear the thought of any other place provided you can accommodate them in your House. In a letter I had the pleasure of receiving from you a short time before your removal to the place of your present residence you were kind enough to say that whenever they were sent to Carlisle you w[oul]d, if your House was large enough, take my Sons. On this I depend, and as I hope you have not forgot my former requests and charges respect[in]g their hours of being at home in the Even[in]g, the company they keep, etc. I will not trouble you by a repetition of them, but content myself with beging you will pay ev'ry attention to their moral conduct that you may think necessary.

As I wish their education to be completed as soon as possible in order that they may be put to the profession w[hi]ch they are to practice in future, I hope they will be industrious. Harry, I believe has not been, at any time, thought otherwise—and, I hope George is rather more so than he was sometime ago. I hope Harry will be forward enough to enter College either this winter or next spring, but of such matters 'tis impossible I can judge.

I enclose you Sixty Dollars in Bank Bills 20 Dollars each. 'Tis proper some money sh[oul]d be deposited for the use of my Sons, and I beg you will be pleased to keep the s[ai]d Sum for that purpose.

With respectful compliments to Mrs. Thomson

I am S[i]r.

Your friend and H[um]ble serv[an]t

A. Ridgely

[*Copy to* Mr. William Thomson
Carlisle, Penna.]

A few months later Ann contemplated sending her elder daughters, Williamina and Mary, to New Port, Rhode Island, to visit their uncle, Captain Thomas William Moore, and as usual consulted her niece for advice. The nephew who was to carry the message was James Wemyss Moore, of Georgia, a recently arrived medical student in Philadelphia. He had been paying his first visit to his relatives at Eden Hill. The letter lacks both salutation and date, but appears to have been addressed to Williamina Cadwalader in the late winter of 1794-1795.

My Nephew intends leaving us Tomorrow and I cannot let him return to Phila[delphi]a without a line or two to you tho' you were not kind enough to fav[o]r me with a single one by him. . . .

I have promised my two Girls, Williamina & Mary, a jaunt this Spring to Newport, and w[oul]d wish to have them set off ab[ou]t the middle of next month. To accomplish this matter I must beg your advice and assistance. Their cousin Wemyss Moore is to go at the same time, but I cannot subject my Daughters to the disagreeable and inconvenient mode of traveling in a common Stage. Will you be so good as to tell me whether a careful person can be engag'd in Philad[elphi]a to take them? I remember hearing you once speak of a man, who I think you call'd Thompson, that you said you c[oul]d venture to go anywhere with and mentioned that he kept a carriage and drove it himself. If this man or any other that you know will take my Children & their luggage be so good as to let me know his terms as soon as possible. My Dear girls have liv'd a solitary life this winter and

I must if possible indulge them in this jaunt and especially as their Uncle has given them a pressing invitation to visit him.

I am always giving you trouble—at present I sh[oul]d be much oblig'd if you w[oul]d purchase as much white Mantua as will make each of the girls a Petticoat, remember they are both tall. Fine plain Jaconet Muslin for a handsome dress for each &, if such a thing can be got reasonably, a Tambour'd Muslin also for each, and enough Buck Muslin for a Petticoat for each. They will require also something dark colour'd, light, fine and strong, for dresses to travell in, be so good as to enquire for these things and if possible let the white Mantua and the Muslins be sent down as soon as a good opportunity may offer, as they can make them up at Home. I intend sending them to your care for the few days they may be in Phila-d[elphi]a before they set off for New York. I hope it will not be inconvenient to you for that time to give them House room.

Give my Love to your three Children. Excuse the trouble I give you, and be assured that if it was in my power to serve you in like manner or any other, your commands w[oul]d be executed with pleasure by

Y[ou]r truly affect[iona]te

A. R.

P. S.

I have requested Mr. Moore to deliver to you Eighty Dollars for the purchases and also 6 p[ai]r stock[in]gs for each of the girls & . . . of the articles above mentioned. I am pleas'd with my Nephew. He appears to be a very prudent clever fellow & has promis'd to spend as much time with us as he can spare. If the cash falls short I will send more the moment I have an opportunity.

We do not know whether Mrs. Cadwalader succeeded in finding a suitable conveyance to carry the young people to New York, but we do know that they arrived there and were impressed by the charm of the city, and delighted with their visit to Mr. Seton. This gentleman was the father of a large family. His daughter Anna Maria had married John Vining the younger, a grandson of Mary Middleton Vining. Williamina described the visit in a letter to her brothers, now at Dickinson College, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, while another, from Mary to

Henry, described the stay they made in Newport. Only the paragraphs relating to the trip have been included.

Newport, Rhode Island July 27, 1795

. . . Mary and myself dined one day at old Mr. Setons'. He is a charming old gentleman and has as fine a set of children as I ever saw. His three oldest sons are married and settled in N. Y. We saw two of them they are not only very handsome but very agreeable, and he has several very pretty daughters that sing as well as their sister Mrs. Vining, *better* is needless. I was very much pleased with Brooklyn a pretty little village (on Long Island) which is only separated from the City of New York by a Ferry. We were there twice to see Mrs. Sands a daughter of Aunt Moore's who is a very clever little woman. This is I think the dullest spot of earth I ever saw in my life, but my uncle and aunt are very kind and attentive to us or I would not have staid here a week, for I'm sure there is nothing out of the family worth staying for. The home my uncle lives in, is brick and has in its time been very handsome, but at present it is only the remnant of an elegant house. My uncle is in manner a good deal like my Mother but in face more like Aunt Bond, he is very short, rather silent, at times deaf, his head quite white, and to crown the whole a true Englishman. I suppose the last word will not go far in his favor with you. Aunt Moore is lively, very agreeable, and has the remains of a beautiful face. When we came here first the oldest son, William Charles Moore was here, he lives in Nova Scotia and he is as much like you, my D[ea]r George as its possible both in face, person and behaviour . . . .

WILLIAMINA RIDGELY

Newport August 6 1795

. . . As I know you are fond of news I will tell you all I know which to be sure is not much neither is it very entertaining. I wrote you word there was a French Ship laying in the river (the Medusa) a few miles off—the Africa an English man of war of sixty four gunns' is laying. The Africa they say is a very beautiful Ship. We have had many invitations to go on board and possibly may. I should like it very much. Whenever the French ship sails,

tis' probable there will be an engagement between her and the Africa. A Mr. Finch one of the officers of his Majesty's Ship has been here since this day week and appears to be an agreeable polite man. I saw a Mr. Abthought some time ago who had been taken by the French (he is an Englishman) he said they had treated him very politely indeed. I suppose you have seen an account in the papers of the death of the Dauphin of France. By some 'tis believ'd he was poison'd but others say not—nobody in this world can positively say—but he from whom no secrets can be conceal'd will know and reward accordingly. . . .

MARY RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Henry Moore Ridgely
to the care of Mr. William Thompson
Carlisle]

Toward the end of October the Ridgely sisters set sail from Newport for home with their cousin Jane, Mr. James W. Moore, and others.

Philadelphia, November 1, 1795

Really my D[ea]r Brothers I begin to fear you have entirely forgot us. So many months have pass'd since either of you have favor'd me with a line, that I fancy you forgot you had such a Sister. You my sly Harry have never favor'd me with a line. We have been so long from home that I doubt whether my friends in Dover will own me or not. If they do not I must e'en take to my heels and return to Philadelphia, New York, New Port, or some of the towns I have quitted so lately.

Mr. Moore, Willy, Jane Moore and My Ladyship with a number more of Ladies and Gentlemen left N[ew] P[or]t the fifteenth of October. The wind blew fair when we sail'd. In a few hours it changed and blew a violent storm which obliged us to anchor at New London where we went on shore and were under the necessity of staying some days on account of the wind. At length we sail'd again and after a pretty long passage landed at Amboy, about 30 miles this side of New York. I never was so sorry for anything as I was at being obliged to pass N. Y. We sail'd round the city so near that we could speak to any person on the wharf. I saw some Gentlemen on the Battery and envy'd them their charming walk indeed. I should certainly have gone on shore had I known the communication between this

City and that had been open. But I was apprehensive if I landed at New York, I should not be suffered to come to Philadelphia, so passed it with the greatest reluctance. We were two nights at Amboy or at least part of two. The second we left there at three oclock in the Morn[in]g and got here at seven the same Even[in]g. Tom Cadwalader has been very Ill, but has recovered in a great measure. I have been above a week in Philadelphia, but can give you no account of home as tis a long time since we have had letters and Mrs. Cad. has not heard since the second of October. We shall certainly hear by the Post on Tuesday. I wrote to Mama this day week and beg'd her to let us hear from her as soon as possible. I have always been told "no news was good news" so this is some comfort, and I am sure if they were not all well we should hear.

You my D[ea]r Boys will excuse this badly written letter when I tell you that for five weeks I have not been able to use my right thumb. The most treafic [sic] pain I ever felt was from that. For some time I suffered from the idea that I should loose it, at any rate the first joint. Tis now much better and I think, and, hope, will cure up without loosing the bone. The nale will come off but that I dont care half so much for.

I wrote each of you a long letter some time ago. Did you receive them? I beg of you to write to me by the first Post. You can't conceive how much pleasure it would give me or you would not refuse me. As soon as I get home I intend to write you each a long letter. I have been almost six months from home and expect to find every thing changed at my return, but I can't tell when that will be. Tis probable we may not leave this city till next week. I fear I shall not be able to live in Kent after seeing New York, for of all towns I ever saw I would chuse to live there but as I never shall will not mention it again. Your cousin Jane Moore spends some months with us. I wish you could peep through a glass and see her. To give you an idea of her, she is very short, very fat, with lite hair, gray eyes, and a very bad complexion. She is no beauty so I will conclude my letter. Adieu My Dear Brothers and believe me to be your sincere friend and affectionate Sister.

MARY RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Henry Moore and George W. Ridgely
At Mr. William Thompson's
Carlisle]

On November 12th Ann wrote to her son Henry, at Dickinson College, that the travellers had arrived home the Tuesday previous.

12th Nov[embe]r 1795

My dear Harry

Yours of the 1st Inst[ant] arrived here on Tuesday Even[in]g last as did your two sisters Willy & Mary accompanied by their cousin Jane Moore. My brother does not go to Europe this Fall as he intended, but is to continue at Rhode Island 'till he receives orders from England which probably will not be before the Spring. Your sisters return'd in perfect health and much delighted with their summer's excursion. . . .

Your Affectionate Mother
ANN RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Mr. Henry M. Ridgely
at Mr. William Thomson's
Dickinson College
Carlisle
c/o Mr. Hillyard.]

The visit of Jane Moore to her aunt at Eden Hill farm led to correspondence between Mrs. Ridgely and Jane's parents relative to her courtship by young Jacob Jones.

The letters and the events which caused them to be written are unrelated to the main thread of Ridgely letters, so they have been arranged as a separate chapter in this volume.

5th June 1796

My dear Sons,

I most sincerely hope you are before this time safe and well at Carlisle. The weather was so very bad the day you left me that I confess I am anxious to hear from you. Did please myself with the hopes of a line or two by the post on Friday, but was disappointed.

I went ab[ou]t an hour after you left home on Monday morn[in]g to see poor Mr. Nixon. I found him very weak indeed, but his recollection was good, and his manners so much the same as when in health, that I had no idea he was so near dying as I soon after found he was, for at ab[ou]t a quarter after 2 o'clock that afternoon he expired. He retain'd his senses

perfectly to the last minute and though very sensible of his approaching dissolution was quite calm and tranquil. He was buried on Wednesday morn[in]g.

I hope I shall hear soon that you are both quite well. I wish I c[oul]d send you the strawberries that were gather'd this morn[in]g.

We have felt very lonesome since you left us. You know a certain person always lov'd upstairs, now she has a companion we never see either of them except at meal times.

I hope Mr. Thomson is recover'd. Give my compliments to the family.

Let me hear from one of you at least once every two weeks. I will write to you once a month, alternately; this is a partnership letter, but I shall direct it to H. M. R. because Nancy sends one to G. W. R. and I do not choose he sh[oul]d be under the necessity of paying for more than one letter at a time. George must answer Nancy's letter, if he can read it, and if he cannot he must tell her so.

Heaven bless you, my dear sons! believe me

Y[ou]r truly affectionate Mother

A. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Henry Moore Ridgely
Dickinson College
Carlisle, Pennsylvania]

The guests who rarely came downstairs except at meal times were Mrs. Ridgely's niece, Jane Moore, and her husband, Jacob Jones. They had been married recently and were still in the honeymoon stage.

In the summer of 1796 we again have correspondence between Eden Hill and Carlisle, most of it from Mrs. Ridgely's pen. In a letter to the boys' instructor, Mr. William Thomson, she expressed her anxiety over George's lack of progress.

July 16th 1796

Sir,

It gives me great uneasiness to find that my Son George has lost so much time since his return to Carlisle. It was my earnest desire that my sons might, and from some circumstances, I had reason to hope they w[oul]d, acquire a sufficient knowledge of the Languages to enable them in future to study either of the Learned professions with advantage, but on

hearing that George did not apply himself to his Books with as much diligence as was necessary to obtain this end, I concluded he was losing time in the pursuit, and therefore, when he came Home last, I mention'd to him that it w[oul]d in my opinion be better to apply himself to Arithmetic. While he continued here he did not determine,—soon after his return to School he wrote to one of his Sisters that he had given up the Languages and sh[oul]d apply diligently to Mathematics. I wrote to him directly after this letter came to hand and desired he would be careful to retain at least the little knowledge he had acquired of the Latin by reading it to himself. Few women, Sir, are capable of directing the education of their Sons. I am thoroughly sensible of my inability but had I thought my Child was losing three-fourths of his time since his return I sh[oul]d most certainly have taken the liberty of writing to you before this on the occasion. I must again repeat that I gave him leave to quit the Greek and Latin if he found himself incapable of acquiring a proper knowledge of them, but I had no idea that he was to spend his time in Idleness. I suppos'd the Mathematics w[oul]d have engag'd much more of his time than I find by your letter they do and that the rest of it w[oul]d have been spent in reading History or in any other manner that might be directed by the Professors of the College.

I shall write to George by this opportunity and desire he will comply with your directions and continue at the Latin as the other Lads do who are learn[in]g Arithmetic.

I am S[i]r,

A. Ridgely

Y[ou]rs of the 9th rec[eive]d this day.

P. S. Let the affection of a mother plead my excuse for the addition of a few lines. I am ever anxious for the good of my children. My sons are far from me. Let me entreat you, Sir, to give them your best advice. They are young, the eldest not yet 17, and they are among Strangers.

A. R.

[*Copy to* Mr. William Thomson
Dickinson College
Carlisle, Penna.]

25th Sept. 1796

My Dear Sons

I rejoiced yesterday Even[in]g at finding by the rec[eip]t of a letter to your Sister Willy, dated the 18th and 20th Instants, that you were then

both well. I most sincerely hope you may long enjoy the continuance of health and ev'ry other Blessing.

The Inhabitants of this County have been highly favour'd this season, scarcely a complaint among them even of a common intermittant.

I wish you had your Waistcoats; they are ready now to send, and I sh[oul]d be very sorry indeed if they sh[oul]d be lost, or even soil'd, as they are very pritty. 'Tis impossible to say w[hi]ch is most so, as there has been hitherto an equal number (among those that have seen them) in fav[o]r of each. Before they were made up George's was thought much the handsomest, but since as many have thought Harry's so.

I am really afraid to send money in letters, but you are so pressing to have some soon, that I shall venture it by this Post, and inclose one hundred Dollars in this which I hope will be amply sufficient for ev'ry purpose for a long time to come. You must remember that you left home on the 30th day of May, and had then (besides money in your pockets before) two hundred & Thirty Six Dollars (88..10). You say you have paid Mr. Thomson the 4th June but you do not say how much, or how much money you have in hand; is your Board, Tuition &c now fully discharg'd to the s[ai]d 4th of June? and how much of the 236 Dollars above s[ai]d did you pay away for the purpose of discharging that? you know the first half year was p[ai]d at the time it became due, & you had not been at Mr. Thomson's a year on the 4th of June last. Let me once more entreat you, my D[ea]r Sons, to be frugal; not mean, by any means, but let nothing tempt you to extravagance—'tis the certain bane of happiness—it is the high road to destruction; if I sh[oul]d be ever so wretched as to find you sh[oul]d, either of you, indulge yourselves in extravagance it w[oul]d blast all my hopes of you, and be the breaking of my heart, for ev'ry pleasing prospect of my remain[in]g days is deriv'd from the hopes of my tenderly beloved children all turning out respectable characters and if only one, among the five, sh[oul]d happen to be otherwise I sh[oul]d go down to the grave with anguish.

Let me intreat you not to spend your time during the vacation in Idleness. Allot some hours ev'ry day to read[in]g and improving yourselves in a knowledge of History &c, and in writing on any subjects that may be most pleasing to you; spend the rest in Manly exercises among proper companions, but not at Taverns let the company be who they may, nor

among Women and Girls, from whom nothing but nonsense and affectation is generally met with now a days. A young Lady visited here last week who profess'd herself "astonish'd to find your sisters at work," and declared, in a sweet simper, that she never [had] Sizars, thimble, needle or thread ab[ou]t her, for it was terrible in a Lady to wear a p[ai]r of Pockets—the French Ladies never did such a thing. What can such a poor vain piece of affectation and folly be worth? Nothing—and if she possess'd the wealth of The Indies and I was a man I w[oul]d scarcely even pay her the compliment of a word. I hope the fair ones of Carlisle are not so *frenchified*, but let them be what they may, y[ou]r Books, if well chosen, are much more suitable companions at y[ou]r ages than any other. Let me hear from you soon. Your Truly affectionate Mother,

A. Ridgely

Inclos'd 2 Bills of 50 Dollars
each—100 Dollars.

Dover, Delaware State Sept. 25, 1796

Well my dear Harry the Waist Coats are at length done, and I hope they will suit you. Mamma drew the patterns of them both, and very different they are. If you recollect you both requested they might be so. Everybody that has seen them has admired them greatly. I hope politeness did not move them all to praise them. Mr. Barry made them in the newest fashion, or at least he was desired to do it and as he appears to be very obliging I make no doubt he did. I shall rejoice if I meet with a safe hand to send them by. This letter will accompany them for as Mamma intends writing to one, or both of you by tomorrow's post that will suffice. You must think me very fond of scribbling for I often trouble you with my letters. I sh[oul]d not call them a trouble, as I make it a rule to judge other people by myself, if you often favor'd me with an answer, but as you scarcely ever do, I cannot help sometimes supposing they are not agreeable. I know my D[ea]r Brother you are very much engaged, and I would rather never have a line from you, than have you neglect for a moment any branch of your Education, but I think if you were to write sometimes to one of us, and sometimes to another it w[oul]d not break in on your Studies. Remember when you have not time sufficient for a long letter, I will be content with a short one, and promise to return a long answer.

Mrs. Jones has at last had a letter from her Mother who lives about a mile & half from New York on Long Island. Aunt Moore wrote to Mamma and a partnership letter to Mary and me. She intends to see Dover this winter. She will divide her time between her Daughter and us. She writes word that my Uncle sail'd from New York for England the 12th of July. She had not heard from him when she wrote tho' her letter was dated the 16th August. It came by Mr. Collins who has just return'd from a tour to York, Boston, etc. I have not seen him but hear he is quite delighted with his excursion. Mr. Clayton came home with Mr. Collins. I have not heard how he passed his time but I think not otherwise than agreeably in that part of the World. Would not you like to take a trip to Boston? Mr. Sipple has been there this Summer for the recovery of his health wh[ic]h has been declining some time. Poor fellow, I hear it is not thought he can out live the Spring. At present he is with Mrs. Sipple, and the little Girl is in Wilmington.

The Inhabitants of Kent have been remarkably healthy this Season. I pray heaven they may continue so.

The little terrapine died a few days ago and Mamma put it in spirits to preserve it. She will not part with it tho' dead. While living we all call'd it her pet tho' she is not famous for such things. To have seen her following it in the sand any person would have supposed she was.

In Aunt Moore's letter to Mamma, she begs her love to you and George. Mrs. Jones, with all this family desire their's to you.

I am as ever most affectionately yours

WILLIAMINA RIDGELY

P. S. Mamma will send you some money. Have you any good grapes at Carlisle. We have some charming ones at present.

In 1797 Henry and George were still at Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. George, having become engrossed in dramatics, seems less homesick but he never forgets the dogs at home and is solicitous about the colts, though he would not part with his dogs for all the colts he ever saw. You will enjoy the description of his costume as a bride in a play given at the college.

His valiant struggles with English spelling are barely suggested by

the symbol . . . where he has crossed out words and tried again, or made other corrections impossible to transcribe.

Carlisle February 14th 1797

Dear Madam.

I have just embraced my pen to answer your letter which I just receaved. You . . . mentioned in your letter that there was a word which I did not spell wright. I soon found it. (it was sleighing.) You need not be uneasy about my neglecting my . . . business for the sake of . . . diversion for there is no person in this place who takes less of it. I have not been in a sleigh but once this season and that was the night we acted the Play. I am verry [sorry] to hear of Brother Abrahams imprudence. I am sorry Dover is so unhealthy for it is the spot which contains every thing that is dear to me.

You said you wiched to hear about the Play[1] we acted this season. It was performed as well as any I ever saw done at Philadelphia, and I am not the only person who thinks so. I had on a white satin petticoat and jacket with a long mussilin train . . . spangled and had gold fring along the bottom and my head was dressed verry well I looked . . . extreamly like a bride in the four first acts & in the last I was dressed in black. I had on white sattin shoes . . . also in the first acts. Hary who acted the part of Sciolto had on a long purple robe & overhals done about with silver lace. Altamont & Horatio had on white Cassimore small cloaths whith short pink coloured robes and helmets. Lothario . . . and Rossino had black sattin small cloaths . . . short blue robes. Lavinia & Lucella was dressed verry well it was performed with a great deal of applause. My dress coast about 14 Dollars there was more mony cleared with it than any other play that has been acted here this great while, which went to the Poor about town. We had tow excellent managers. You said you thought Edward the Black Prince would have been a better Play to act but nothing but the most tragical thing could move the People about this town. Edward is tragical enough but there are too . . . many characters. Beleave me your ever affectionate son

Geo W Ridgely

You told me in your letter that my . . . dogs were both well and . . . what was of more consequence your colts were . . . beautiful and in fine order, but it is not of more consequence to me for I . . . would not part with my

[1] *The Fair Penitent* by Nicholas Rowe, 1703.

dogs for all the colts that ever I saw. John Hillyard just receaved a letter in which he heard his father has lost eight creatures among which was his little mare they died with the yellow . . . water so take care of your beautiful colts. I do not think you can read this scrawl for I am in a great hurry. take care of my Dogs. And beleave me yours

GEORGE WEMYSS RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
Dover
State of Delaware]

Carlisle. February 27th 1797

Dear Mother

I wish you would send money sufficient to pay for our board &c by the first opportunity, as Mr. Thomson informed me today that he was in need of money & should be glad if I could pay him. If it is convenient I wish you w[oul]d send about a hundred & fifty dol[lar]s. His account is between thirty & forty pounds. I have an account of the money spent by us & hope it will satisfy you when you see it, as I suppose you think we have spent too much since we have been here, you must consider tho' that things are very dear here, & that we have to purchase wood, candles &c.

We shall not commence untill Fall as we are not fit to stand an examination in the mathematics. There will be a general examination on the twentieth of next month, & on the 21st the Senior Class and some out of the Grammar School will speak publicly, the former compositions, the latter orations. I have chosen Scepticism for my subject. George is well.

Your affectionate Son
HENRY M. RIDGELY

I have just rec[eive]d your letter in w[hic]h you desire to know when the commencement will be w[hic]h you will see in this letter. Charles Smith is very highly esteemed in this place as a Lawyer. I am told is as much thought of in Lancaster. I would choose, with your approbation, to study with him; as there is in our Class a young fellow of the name of Montgomery (Brother to the Gentlemen who married Miss Robison who lives in Lancaster) who will commence with me & study Law at the same time with his Brother. I think George might study the mathematics more advantageously with a good English master, as the Teacher of Mathematics

here lets the boys study if they please & if they do not please, he seems to care nothing about [it]: he is tho' a very expert mathematician.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
Dover
Delaware State.]

Carlisle March 19th 1797

Dear Madam

I have once more taken up my pen to address my dear mother to let her know of the wellfare of Harry and myself. Harry and McComb is at meeting. John Hillyard and myself were there this morning. On Tuesday there will be a public Examination in the Collige and on Wensday there will be speaking by some of the students, Harry will speak but not myself. I was not asked to speak and if I had been I do not think I would, because when I acted in the play Thompson was mad and said I had not time, but I did not lose half an hour all the time, but Thompson thinks it is a sin to act plays; but that did not hinder me. All the people in this town wish their children to act, and one of the managers in the play we acted was a trustee of the Collige and if they and the rest of the teachers are agreed I do not think Thompson has any right to say anything about it, I like him very well only on that account and I had rather live in his house than any other in town. There is 51 Students in Collige at present and some more expected. I have nothing more to tell you at present only to take care of my Dogs.

Beleave me yours
GEO. W. RIDGELY

I looked for your last letter but could not find it there was one word spelled wrong in it but I forget what it is at present.

Carlisle
[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
Dover
State of Delaware]

Many exciting events were occurring in Philadelphia during the last years of the century, and "Mrs. Cad," a sprightly correspondent and keen-eyed observer, kept her Aunt Ann informed of many of them. The following letter was addressed to Eden Hill Farm. It is long and alludes to so many topics it has seemed wise to make some explanations. The Robert Morris financial imbroglio is too well-known to need any.

The Mr. Travis, whom "Mrs. Cad" mentions, had married Betsy Bond who was Ann Ridgely's niece and Williamina Cadwalader's sister. Anxiety for her health is mentioned later in this letter. Mr. Travis managed the business affairs of many of his wife's family.

Tom Cadwalader, "Mrs. Cad's" son, was studying law with Edward Tilghman. At the date of this letter, a law or medical student paid a fee to his preceptor. There follows some gossip and "Mrs. Cad" begs not to be quoted by her aunt, because she might be open to attack from the "Tsarina." At a guess, one might suppose this to allude to Mrs. Bingham, but there were several towering dictators in Philadelphia society at that time. Mrs. Blodget was the handsome daughter of Provost Smith and his wife. She was often alluded to as "Mrs. B."

A little girl is mentioned as living in "Mrs. Cad's" home. She was the daughter of Williamina Smith and Charles Goldsborough of Maryland. Her mother died soon after her birth and "Mrs. Cad," as usual, came to the rescue.

Among the good offices of "Mrs. Cad" was the purchase of books for the aunt down on the Kent County farm. Mme. D'Arblay published in 1796 a novel of several volumes, entitled *Camilla.* This book soon found its way to Philadelphia and "Mrs. Cad" sent as many volumes as she could secure on a request from Eden Hill Farm.

A paragraph refers to Mary Vining's seclusion and deep mourning after the death of General Anthony Wayne. There had been an affair of long standing between the two. As it led to a romance of some note, a chapter is devoted to it in this book. Toward the end of the letter is a description of Provost Smith in "Mrs. Cad's" humorous vein. Gilbert Stuart made a very different and dignified picture of him, but this one is vivid, to say the least. Molly Hamilton, a relative of Andrew Hamilton, lived at Woodlands and was a Moore connection.

Feb[ruar]y 20 1797

I wrote you by the Post but as I had then very little time I could only say what my own opinion was as to the size of Morris's Notes, but before my letter was quite finish'd I saw Mr. Travis, and he confirm'd the impossibility of your buying so small a sum as you mention, but says he has heard of notes of 2000 Dol. so that perhaps if you care to venture one hundred Dol. it might be done though it is a chance; it must be done by a broker as gentlemen do not like to appear in it many people are of opinion that the low price of these notes is done by themselves, Morris and Nicholson, with a view to their buying them up—which they are said to have done, and to be doing—but this is only common report. My own particular friends being out of the way of speculating, Travis dislikes it and does less than any trading man I know—but in this business of Morriss' some of the most prudent people have ventur'd to buy. I was fool enough to lay out 500 Dol: when the notes were 6/3 in the pound, knowing wise heads such as Edward Tilghman's had bo[ugh]t, when the notes were ten shilling in the pound I can only now be sorry, I had not invested untill this time, when that money should have gone the same way, as the risque though great is for so large a stake. Our farm rent for this year has not yet been paid, so that I have been hardly put to it to make out without borrowing, and out of my income I mean to pay Tom's fee to Tilghman, so that I do not know whether I can squeeze out a little more in time. If I can I shall put in to this Lottery of Morris' which I see just in that light—and must take my chance for a Blank.

I suppose Nancy Allen has been talked of even at Dover—the circumstances of Greenleaf's obtaining a divorce from his wife that he might marry her has made much noise. The divorce was obtain'd in N[ew] England and laid before lawyers here, some of whom have refused being concern'd; other have said that they were sorry to acknowledge that a Divorce given in one state must hold good in another. In this infamous business, Greenleaf alleged that he had an intrigue with his wife long before they were married, and that on her friend's discovering that she was with child and writing to intreat him to return and marry her and his own brother joining in the wish that he would save her from infamy he had unwillingly married her since which he makes no charge except that her temper was

bad, and that once she had box'd a servant's ears. But it appears to me to be a transaction of a most schocking nature—the brothers' of Mrs. Greenleaf were the true benefactors of Greenleaf. She had a large fortune, long after he came here he talk'd of his wife and child coming over, always spoke of his family as if they were soon to join him here, untill Miss Allen's passion, and his, commenced. Then the Divorce was hinted at, and the world artfully sounded. But upon finding there was but one voice on the subject, these charges were brought forward and Greenleaf acknowledges that she had been guilty with himself. When this business originated Greenleaf was immensely rich;—he is most embarrassed in his fortune, and some people think Mrs. Lawrence wishes to break it off, but how it is to terminate is only doubtful on the score of fortune—their liberal minds have done with all other scruples. This is much the theme of conversation, but do not name me if you speak of it as I should not like to be attacked by the Tsarina. I hear Mrs. Blodget has lately had a contest with her but all I know of either is from hearsay.

This is a strange affair of Miss Vinings'—tho' "None but the brave deserve the fair" and that he was brave is undoubted, but such a weather-beaten vulgar affected old soldier I should have thought would not have suited her refinement. I at first heard it from Mrs. Fergusson, who had it from a person that had lived a year with Miss Vining; since then I have had a confirmation.

And now let me seriously beg you to take the most vigorous measures to restore your health which is to your children of infinite consequence. Your complaint must be a very serious one indeed and I hope you will trifle no longer with it. If you are able to come up here pray do at once and take the best advice. I do assure you that I will lay myself out to make you happy here, which I can very well do, for though I felt the smallness of this house in comparison to the one I left, it is extremely pleasant and I have always a room for you and yours'. It is the sincere wish of my heart to see you if you can bear the journey and if not at present as soon as you are well enough I entreat you to come. You will then be able to judge of a proper place for Nancy. I have since I wrote to Mrs. Howel thought it possible Lizzy Irvine might take her; there is no woman in this town that I would so soon place a child with. Mrs. Donalds' is another very eligible place, and they are good sensible people. But when it happens you ought

to come with her. There is nothing that you wish done by me for her that I will not do, she is an honest hearted good girl, and I am sure will make a fine woman.

Betsy is very complaining. She said to me the other day that she had taken it into her head that she was no favorite with you and she did not know why, for she both loved and respected you. I told her I would tell you. . . .

Mamma is a most miserable woman. Even to see Tom who has been quite ill she could not be prevailed upon to stir from home:—This winter and at this time Mrs. Blodget has chosen to desert me: I do not regret it you may be sure. For her mother's sake I long stood by her and exerted myself often to prevent her exposing herself, but I had long seen it was in vain, and she has taken a fortunate step for me. I wish for no intercourse with her. This poor little child that is with me is deserted by them all. She has a happy temper and will never feel it. I will do what I can for her from duty, though her grandfather with his immense wealth might place her where she would be better off. My children do not, nor ever will, love her. Fortunately she does not care; if she felt more I should love her better, but of this I am determined that unless there is a prospect of her growing up with a love of truth at least I will not keep her after she is 12 years old. In the mean time I will pay her every attention in my power and continue to treat her as my own.

March 8th

You will see by the date of the beginning how long this has been in hand. It is a hasty and imperfect scrawl which you will much oblige me by burning.

Poor Betsy is in a wretched way. Added to her other complaints her breast for some weeks has been violently affected, and though twice bled and a variety of remedies applied she is still so ill that I never leave her except to run home for an hour, untill she is fixed for the night. When she insists on my going home to sleep my mind as well as body is fatigued. . . .

I wrote you by the Post that none of the Paper in circulation sh[oul]d be bo[ugh]t for you. It is now tho[ugh]t that it was never intended by them to pay more than the price the notes sold for, and believ'd by most people to have been done to serve immediate exigencies; however it is too desperate a

measure to think of now, as *they are* situated. When I thought well of them I told you so, but now I hear people who are themselves concern'd in the paper acknowledge that it is not worth much if anything, and all agree they have done with it, for me if I ever get my Five hundred Dol's again I take leave of speculating. It is the 2nd time—the first I have much to hope from if I live a year longer.

I hope Jeffery will not disappoint me. Everything shall be sent you and I hope a round of Beef which I have wished to get a convenient opportunity of sending to you.

Greenleaf is so constantly with Nancy Allen that it is generally believ'd they will soon be married. Mrs. Powel never goes into public though she sees both abroad and at home a good deal of company but on the Ball given to the President on his birthday, as it was to be the last, she made her appearance at it. Drest in black velvet—I am told she look'd very well —and that it is what she never intended doing again, but merely went on that great occasion. She leads a very agreeable rational life, and being without children and no tie to make home pleasing if she went more out, for instance to the theatre, I sh[oul]d not blame her. I do not believe anything under a Washington could induce her to marry, but as to the man you mention, if he was ten thousand times richer I am sure she w[oul]d spurn at him, and more over that the people you hear are promoting it w[oul]d go crazy if he was to marry. I have heard that somebody was rude enough to joke Mrs. P. about Major Butler, and that she made answer, no man w[oul]d dare to speak to her on such a subject.

Betsy though a little better is still in a very bad way. I declare to you if she was not with child I sh[oul]d have no hopes of her recovery. Mamma does not get much good by seeing her.

I rece[ive]d yours by the Post and am sorry to tell you there is only the 1st 2d and 4th Vols of Camilla to be had—by some accident the 3d has not been sent from N. York. Sh[oul]d it not arrive I shall think it best to send all the Vols. that are here by Jeffery, and take the chance of some person taking the third when it is to be had which may not be 'til the 5th arrives. It is a perfect and beautiful picture of youth, and though not generally thought equal to Cecilia it pleases me better. The scenes are all natural and beautiful, and except 2 low characters—and they divert me a little—there is nothing to except to in the whole work. The Tyrolds are,

all but Lionel, perfect. Becky thinks there was no necessity to make Sir Hugh so great a fool, but I think the whole of his character charming—his only misfortune in his own mind was not having learnt Latin but you will read it and tell the girls not to fall in love with good Mr. Young Mandlebest. Nancy prefers Sir Sedley Clarendel. It is a character that may strike you as being out of nature, but I once knew a man that was brave, sensible and highly accomplish'd that was his counterpart. His name was Gardner, a man of high rank in the British Army.

Since I began this letter you will find my sentiments have changed much with regards to Morris—the fact is that he and Nicholson are generally tho[ugh]t to be ruined. People who have much of their paper, as many have bo[ugh]t as high as ten shillings in the pound, are greatly alarmed. The new notes have been offer'd for 6 pence in the pound. No body buys now; the large house and much other property is advertised by the Sheriff; in short their state is a hopeless one, and I have reason to be thankful that I did not buy for you. My note is involved in one of Mr. Travis's for a larger sum. He had property secur'd to him by Morris for a loan which he hopes will secure the note in which mine is concern'd. I did it without my Brothers consent or knowledge, and if I lose my 500 Dol. have to blame myself only. The parson has not p[ai]d the balance; your share shall be bo[ugh]t when he does according to your wish—it is not probable it will bring much in these times. You will see by the papers what a situation we are in with our good Allies.

There is a report that Molly Hamilton is to be married to Mr. Hope, a handsome young dutchman immensely rich. He is now gone to Carolina, and she most certainly believes him attached, but with some it is a doubt, and Miss Bingham is said to be her rival. He has been attentive to both, and perhaps has only flirted—a little time will show.

The Duke of Orleans is said to be paying his addresses to Abby Willing, the youngest and only single daughter of Mrs. Willing; it is a strange sort of connection if true and she may perhaps be Queen of France. I have now only to tell you that Jeffery has not called since the first day.

Your letter by the Post came to hand yester[da]y. No tidings of Jeffery. I hope he will not go off without calling. I have told Fanny to call at Mrs. Hamiltons. I have got all 4 of Camilla for you by taking a set that had been used at least some of the Vols. The 5th vol. is not yet published. The set I

had to read was Mrs. Ketland's. In the third Vol. you will read a sermon to a young lady that contains everything a good parent would recommend to a child, but what few would be capable of writing; it is an elegant composition. Everything is ready for you but the Antwerp Raspberry. The road from here to the Bettering house is so bad now that I am afraid to ride but must try to get somebody to go on a horse for me. I wrote you a very mistaken acc[oun]t of Russia Sheeting some time ago—a piece of brown can be procured for 6, and white for 8 and 3/2 the other 3/9 p[e]r y[ar]d. Give me your orders; you limitted me so low that I cannot venture to send it. Mamma says when I wrote to you I must have been thinking of Irish Sheeting. White Russia is very scarce I saw but one piece. Doct[o]r Smith told me yesterday that Morris's creditors had given him a little time. However, nobody ventures on his paper which has been offer'd for 6 cents; there are many people here in great distress who have been tho[ugh]t very rich.

I hope you will not be displeased to hear your Bond is in Mr. Tilghman's hands. Magaw told my brother that he did not owe half the money he had p[ai]d, sh[oul]d pay no more, and behav'd with such insolence that there was no other recourse. He defy'd him to do his worst. My Brother told him as Mr. Tilghman knew the affair, he should settle it and he has it. . . .

Sally's Pappa came up the day before yester[da]y and left town this morn[in]g. He dined with me yesterday as did Doct[o]r Smith and Richard. The poor man appear'd affectionate and fond of his child. The Doct[o]r treated him rudely several times—he is an old Turk; Richard is a good kind hearted fellow, easy in his fortune and happy in himself. The old man's rheumantism oblig'd him to make such hideous faces that my children several times tittered so loud that I expected he w[oul]d see them, and once in rising from his chair he yell'd so piteously that they burst out. They always thought him different from any other human creature and when they were little called him Giant Grumbo. By way of walking stick he carries an old brush handle—so much for my uncle and your brother, who has a large gray beard on the top of his nose. Mrs. B. visits now almost constantly Mrs. Redmixon and Mrs. Meray two actresses—they seem her only acquaintance: She is with child. I believe her husband is no longer fond or kind; there have been fracasses that have alarm'd the neighbourhood.

Polly's letter acquainting me of your illness gives me great concern; most anxiously I long for the Post. I have sent a little pot of Ginger to the X-Roads, [Duck Creek Cross-Roads, now Smyrna, Del.] which I hope you will get. We tried the town over to buy it but could not get a morsel, and Becky sent to Mrs. Liston who said as it was for you she w[oul]d send the best Antiqua Ginger and you have it as she put it up seal'd and all. I do long yet to hear of you.

Tuesday March 28

Mary's letter by Buckmaster has greatly reliev'd me, as I find by it that your disorder is subdued. You must indeed from this time wear flannel always next your skin and be on a different plan entirely from what you have hitherto pursued. The first step must be a journey when the weather is sufficiently settled, and your strength will permit. I shall never rest 'till you come up here and try what change of air will do. I am comfortably settled here, and have room enough for you and yours and nothing, I now again repeat, is so much my wish as to see you. Mamma entreats you to come—she has been very wretched since we heard of your illness. It is very necessary that these letters on every acc[oun]t should be burnt, particularly as so much is said of Morris's affairs. You will do me the greatest favor then to have them burnt in your own room. The great man so often mention'd has sold his Palace in Chestnut Street. It is supposed Leroy has bought it for a Dutch Company; he has made other assignments to satisfy his numerous creditors, but he is generally suppos'd to be ruined. Among other distressed people the Wilson family are conspicuous, and greatly to be pitied; their furniture has been advertised by the Sheriff and the sale is only postponed. Ruston lives in Jail and is trying to get out insolvent, but he is thought a very bad man, and it is doubted whether he will succeed.

As Congress are again called perhaps you may have it in your power to serve Mrs. Hand. I must write a line to Mary though I have nothing very particular to say and will now conclude, with my most hearty prayers for your perfect recovery and that I may very soon have the pleasure to see you here. Love to Willy who has quite forgot me and to Nan, who I expect soon to see. Fix your mind as to the place I mention and I will apply.

Your very affectionate

W. C.

I do not exactly recollect whether I ever sent the acc[oun]t for your last divident & now I enclose one.

Betsy gains ground slowly if at all. I am very unhappy about her.

I have charged you for all the Vol's of Camilla to save trouble.

From Williamina, at the Farm, to Harry at Carlisle:

Dover May 25th, 1797

My dear Brother,

Mamma and Nancy have gone to visit Mrs. Clayton. Mary and myself are left to keep the *house from running away* for as it is so little and light you know there is some danger. A few days ago there was in Dover a wild animal of the Buffaloe kind, call'd a Bison. I did not see the fright—for so it is thought by most that have had a squint of it. Mamma was passing by the stable where it was kept and met Mr. Robinson who intreated her to step in and see it. She thinks it the most terrible looking thing she ever beheld but was in such haste to get out of the stable that she had not a good view of it. Next week the Bison will be brought back to Town, and then I hope the man may be persuaded to bring it out to this house for tho' I'm anxious to see it I could not think of going to a tavern stable for the purpose.

Mr. Ralston said on Sunday that he intended to write each of you a long letter in the evening to go by Monday's post. I suppose he did so, but if the postmasters are as careful as of late they have been you probably will not receive them before this reaches you.

John Hillyard will quit Kent on Monday. He kindly offer'd to take charge of anything we had to send. Mamma will inclose money to you. It is the fashion now in Philadelphia to wear the cravat tied, and without a bow. The ladies too must be stuck up with cravats. In this *cool* weather it is as good to whiten the neck as a thick blanket would be. I have surrounded mine with one. Rather be out of the world than the fashion—even in this lonely corner of the earth it seems necessary to pay some regard to other people's follies. Mr. Dashiel has now commenced student of physic and intends to treat the body as well as soul. I wonder what he will try next. Mr. Wiltbank (parson) was lately married to a Miss Cooper of Sussex.

She is the fifth lady I have heard of his paying his address to and perhaps he has courted many others. By this time he must be expert in that art. He was nearly as famous for his attentions to the fair sex as Mr. Johnny Swanwick and had like to have been as unsuccessful.

Have you seen the President's speech? I think it beautiful but don't pretend to be a judge of such matters.

I hope you will in your next letter tell what your young horse is to be called.

I hope before long to have a sheet full from you. You owe me a letter now, but I am not ceremonious with those I love. Indeed, you and George are generally in my debt. Mamma and both the girls will send you letters, so that a long one from me will not be necessary. You know there is not much stirring here at any time. At present 'tis duller than common. The whole family join in love to you both.

I am yours sincerely

WILLIAMINA RIDGELY

Excuse the badness of my pen

Again, the following letter is addressed by Mrs. Cadwalader to her Aunt Ann Ridgely. In it she mentions a horseless carriage passing her door.

May 29th 1797

Your's of the 12th by the Post and 20th by Mr. Harris came safe to hand. And I am happy to find that your health is so much better. I think your plan a good one—of riding out and trying to get well where you are, till after Harvest—because I wish you to be from home all August, and if you are sure the cross road leading from Willmington into the Lancaster road is safe think your returning by Philad[elphi]a [is] as well as coming up and going down from here, unless you do both and I see no reason why you should not. You are to consider in a journey for Health, and pleasure what will most conduce to both. The Road from your House here is very good, from here to Lancaster perfect; inquire very particularly before you set out how it is from Willmington—I believe very bad; so much for advice. And

now let me inform you that after being led to move to be near my friends, and told that I might live here as long as I pleased in expectation of which I have laid out above Four Hundred Dollars, the owner of the House has sold it and I must move at the end of the year, at all events; but as good sometimes arises from evil, I am so fortunate as to have offer of a much better House than this rather nearer Mamma, near enough to Betsy and for the same rent. It is Governor Mifflin's house which Mr. Rundle has bought and offers to me, so that I mean to move into it next week as the owner of this will gladly take it off my hands. And I may now own to you that I have never had room enough in this house to be tolerably comfortable —it will be very different in the one I am going to—it is equal to my Wishes and I shall have the pleasure of hearing Fanny talk of the Miss Ridgelys Room as she used to do in Vine Street. And I can now with heart-felt satisfaction look forward to your visit. As to your not coming here I will not hear of it. You have fixed on a fine healthy country for your ride. But both Betsy and myself abhor Lancaster. We went unfortunately to Slough's where we were most miserably treated; rain coming on we stayed two nights, and returned to Downings' where we were as well off as in our own Houses. At Lancaster Mrs. Smith behaved in the most polite and friendly manner and if I had been alone I would have gone to her House, but Betsy could not. At the Prince Ferdinand near Charles Smith's house, I am told the accommodations are better than at Slough's and the people civil. At Downings' dinner for Betsy, Tom and myself was a dollar, Nan Travis not charged for at all, a bottle of Porter one/10. At Slough's we had wine and porter included in our bill—one Pint of Wine, one bottle of Porter and were charged almost Five Dollars. At Downings' you have as healthy a Country, better accommodations and what I tell you as to pay, half a Crown a meal without Liquers, eight pence for Lodging. The limestone water will be a great service to you and I wish you w[oul]d stay there some time. Were you to go only to Downings Town and Philadelphia you would do the wise thing. If the road was not dreadful I would beseech [you] to go to the Yellow Springs—but it is the worst Road that I know from Lancaster Road. . . .

I am afraid you will meet with no such place as Mrs. Donalds for Nancy. I think them the best people for the purpose I know in this town—neat,

sensible and good; they will probably meet with a child soon, I think if you were to write it w[oul]d not be amiss to engage a place for her there. As to Boarding School the low company a girl meets with is a great objection, and as to Music and Dancing we all know it is not acquired in a Season.

The muslin you sent is not very pretty or cheap. They are not better looking than Calicos but there is not anything of the color or nearly like it to be had. There are Clouds and other figures, but nothing is seen here on genteel People but White, and certainly nothing is so pretty. . . .

Mamma was not at Lancaster nor did she ever think of going.

I have To-day seen a waggon go through our Street without Horses, a piece of Mechanism that charms me as I look forward to having a carriage that I can wind up and set going as I do my watch, without trusting my Life to the Mercy of drunken Coachmen or perhaps wild Horses.

With love to the girls I am truly your affectionate.

W. C.

Thomas Macomb, who lived in Wilmington, but whose family had land and close personal ties in Kent County, was a Dickinson College schoolmate of the Ridgely brothers. All were at home, when he sent these two facetious notes.

Wilmington December 1, 1797

Dear Hal,

I believe I might without any danger of being caught in a falsehood begin my letter as you began yours, "Albeit not in the writing mood" but in writing to you I can always hit upon something to scrawl if it is but nonsense (of which, by the bye, my last was full).

J. Thomson passed thro' here the other day on his way from N[ew]ark. He goes to Carlisle about Christmas; he was very glad when he heard you were going to Lancaster as he expected to receive some letters from you then. Write me word when you go to L.

You give great encouragement to go to Lancaster; you say "I will be like the ass between two bundles of hay." Now I am very much obliged to you for the simile (for it is good) but I beg to be excused, as I would much rather be near one, which, by the bye, I would have been this afternoon

had it not been for a particular engagement which could not be put off; but, Please God, I will see her tomorrow, which will do quite as well.

Don't tell anybody, but I believe you a d---l of a Lyar when you say that you will not visit a girl in Lancaster, because I know you are too fond of them to leave off visiting them all at once.

I spent a very agreeable evening, two or three evenings ago, with 5 or 6 Wilmingtonians. However, *she* was not among the number or probably it would have been more agreeable than it was; but there was no room for complaint.

Your conjecture concerning Mr. Rumsey's marriage was wrong. I have not heard when they were to be married but I suppose it will not be long. However, Dr. Sykes' absence did not prevent it I imagine.

Write as often as possible you lazy D---l.

I am your sincere friend

THOMAS I. MACOMB

Excuse haste

[*Addressed to* Henry M. Ridgely
near Dover]

Wilmington December 27, 1797

Dear Hal,

I should have written to you sooner, but on Wednesday last I was obliged to ride about 30 miles up the country, where I lodged at a Patterson Bell's of whom, no doubt, you have heard Moses speak. I did not return home till Friday when I was too much fatigued to write. Monday, Christmas day, I was at Church and today I am at home, writing to you.

I received a letter sometime ago from Sprigg. He told me he had rec[eive]d about 500 comp[limen]ts from Miss Montgomery and that he was sorry he had ever seen her. All the ladies in Carlisle were well except your adored Miss S. Montgomery. He did not mention her disease but I suppose it was the Green sickness. Agnew and Maginly were the only gallants Carlisle afforded since *you* left it.

I wrote to Moses sometime ago, but don't know whether my letter found him living or not, as I have received no answer as yet. If you hear from him before or after you go to Lancaster, do let me know of it, for I am

afraid he is gone to the shades, "that country from whose bourne no traveller returns," and I think it a great pity Society should lose so good a member and the Ladies so fine a Gallant.

I forgot to mention, that as I returned home from my expedition up the country, I stopped at an acquaintance's where a fine girl prepared a supper (on Thursday evening) while another sat with me to entertain me—was not this charming? They wished me to stay all night, but as I had torn my breeches from the buttonhole in the fold, almost round, and could not get another pair to put on, I did not choose to expose parts that ought to be concealed, so I came on to Mr. Gardner's where I lodged all night. I got a pair of John Mill's to ride home in, in the morning.

It is getting late so I will say a good night. I am your sincere friend

THOMAS I. MACOMB

[*Addressed to* Henry M. Ridgely
near
Dover]

When Henry Moore Ridgely had finished his course at Dickinson College, he was sent to Lancaster to read law with his relative, Mr. Smith. In a letter of January 3, 1798, he gives in some detail his arrangement for boarding with the respectable Mr. Kerr.

Through the next several months his sister Mary, visiting in Philadelphia, was a faithful correspondent. He likewise heard with some frequency from Dover, and now and then from former schoolmates.

Lancaster–January 3, 1798

Dear Mother

I arrived here safe last Monday even[in]g and lodged in Mr. Smith's house that night. Next day I got boarding in the house of a Mr. Kerr a respectable citizen of this place. He has one more boarder Wm. C. Frazer who studies law with Mr. Montgomery. He has 20 Shillings a week, exclusive of washing, w[hic]h is the common price of board in Lancaster. He finds us in candles & which I am told other persons who take boarders do not furnish. He lives some distance from Mr. Smith's office on a pretty eminence in the Town.

Mr. Smith informs me he let you know he intended to take no fee. He has a very large Law Library and I believe a good private one. I am the only Student he has.

I am,
Dear Mother,
Your affectionate & dutiful son
H. M. Ridgely

My love to the Family &c

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
Dover, Del.]

Philadelphia Jan[ua]ry 31, 1798

I am really apprehensive that my D[ea]r Harry has forgotten me, or after all I have said, after repeatedly begging of him to write, he could not be so obstinate as to remain silent. Only one letter have I receiv'd from you, and that I immediately answered. Let me once more entreat of you to let me hear from you.

I generally hear from Dover once a week and I had the pleasure of hearing this Morn[in]g by Mr. White that all our friends were well. I told Mr. W. we regretted that Miss P. did not come up when we did; he said he sh[oul]d have been happy had she taken that opportunity of coming but gave no reason why she did not. I suspect there was a little miff somehow or other.

Last Thursday night I was at the Assembly and enjoy'd myself much. Being a stranger, I receiv'd the most particular attention from the Man[a]gers, had first set first couple handed to me, good partners, and danc'd the whole Even[in]g. I have also been at Mrs. Adams's, where I was much pleased. I cannot say as much for the Ball I was going to when my last was written. I have only been to two Plays but mean to go again tomorrow even[in]g to see "Wives as they were, and Maids as they are." Tis said to be a fine Play. I have a vast deal to say but nothing which cou[l]d be pleasing to you. You are so studious that I suppose you care nothing about anything but Law and History. Miss Sykes is not yet married, but Mr. White says he supposes she will be in a week or two. Write to me I beg of you. Pray present my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. K. When I hear of anything worth relating you shall know it. Have you had any snow in Lan-

caster. We have a little. Yesterday afternoon, I spent in the sleigh. Adieu my d[ea]r Brother

Yours most affectionately
M. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* H. M. Ridgely
at Mr. Kerr's
Lancaster, Pa.]

Philadelphia March 3, 1798

I have only time my dear Harry to write a line, to beg and intreat of you to write to me. Only once have I heard from you, and that a long while since.

I suppose you know Miss Sykes and Mr. Rumsey are married, Mr. Collins and Miss Bellach, and Monday Mr. Miller and Miss Loockerman are to be married. This is all the news from Dover. We had a g[ran]d Ball on the 23 of Feb[rua]ry. Saw you had one in Lancaster. Pray who was at it. Ours was charming. I never enjoy'd myself so much in my life. We had seven sets on the floor at once, and the greatest good humour and harmony, every body pleased. I met many people I knew, more that I did not.

Lyon sent to one of the Man[age]rs for a Card, but did not get it. He sent a second time. The answer was "Tell Mr. Lyon we admit none but Gentlemen" So his Lordship did not get in.

Thursday I intend going to the Assembly—in fact every day brings its engagements; in the midst of it all the reflection of your indifference is extremely painful. Let me hear from you which will add much to my happiness. In Mama's last she says she is uneasy at not hearing from you lately. I hope you have written. Adieu.

Yours most affectionately
M. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Henry Moore Ridgely
Lancaster, Pennsylvania]

The Mr. Lyon referred to in the foregoing letter was United States Representative from Vermont. Perhaps politics affected the temper of the managers of the ball of which Mary writes.

Philadelphia, March 19, 1798

Unexpected pleasures they say are far most agreeable. Of course your favor was, as I really had dispair'd of hearing more from you. But how

cou[l]d you reconcile it to your conscience, leting Mr. Yates come to Philadelphia without writing to me! I suppose Conscience was asleep. I wish you wou[l]d not suffer it to doze quite so often.

I heard from Mama Saturday Even[in]g. All your friends were then well. I begin to be quite anxious to return. Not that I am tired of being here, for the extreme kindness of Mrs. Cadwalader and her Children, with the attention I meet with from other people, w[oul]d render any place pleasing, but Mama says she wishes me at home and indeed I think 'tis quite necessary I sh[oul]d now return. I shall have completely cheated the Winter for instead of staying six weeks here, I shall I fancy complete the three months and return to the Country when everything is becoming beautiful.

Sunday afternoon I call'd at Judge Smiths. They told me Mr. Yates had just left them—said he had spoken in the highest terms of you my D[ea]r Harry as a studious, sober young man. Continue to deserve his good opinion and that of all your friends. You will then render them happy.

I am griev'd about George. Trade is so bad owing to the French taking our vessels and so many merc[han]ts have been ruin'd that tis a difficult matter to meet with one. Mordicai Lewes is spoken of; I sincerely hope whoever he is with may be a good man and in fine business. 'Tis the destruction of a Lad to put him in Philadelphia unless he has sufficient employment. And you know if the French take all our ships no Trade can be carried on. However, no ship will go out now unarm'd. Of all things I dread War. Yet how can we avoid it? Heaven grant some pitying Angel may defend us from it but 'tis the opinion of every body here that unless there is a change of men in France, we will not escape it.

Your news was Beaten. I knew all about the wedding before and if I am not much mistaken wrote you word of it, but as we both receive letters from home, I suppose we hear all the news. You know Miss Bellach and Mr. Collins are married, Mr. Miller and Miss Loockerman, Mr. Rumsey and Miss Sykes, I know are other matches. Yesterday week I was at a dance at Mr. Liston's and tho' it was extremely warm and the room very much crowded, I danc'd a good deal. Next even[in]g I was at one at Mr. Lyle's and the next we had one at home. You will cry out "what a disapated girl, how much must she be altered." I am indeed much altered. Yet believe me, I have no turn for disapation. I love to be here with Mrs. C and while here am oblig'd to partake of those follies which are far from agree-

able. I often plead a headache and stay at home. Saturday I did this, tho' I really had one then, and was sorry for it, for the people to whose house I was invited are great favorites of mine. Tomorrow we are ask'd to a large tea party at Mrs. Meredith's.

I suppose you have seen an account of the Ship New Jersey being taken by the De----sh French. They are still at Porto Rico and M. C. Gibson's son and Mr. McCall's are pris[one]r to them. I really feel for their friends particularly the G's.

Did you hear Jones had taken Sipple's Farm? And was to remove to it in the Spring. Poor unsettled creature—'tis a pity when people don't know their own minds five minutes together.

The chev[alier] Yerägo and Miss McKean are to be married in a few days 'tis said. The Little Ugly Mortal has just gone past which put me in mind of him. Remember to write by Mr. Smith.

Most sincerely do I wish you were here to escort me home again but as it is that cannot be. I am quite anxious about returning. Before I leave the City you shall hear from me again. Mama talks of coming up but I fancy 'tis only talk. As this will not be sent to the office for a day or two perhaps I may add more if I hear any news I certainly will tell it you. I heard lately a long story about a Spirit in Lancaster. Have there been any such tales? I don't mean to ask for Spirits for you know I don't believe in them. And has there been an Earthquake there?

Adieu my dear Harry

Write soon
and believe me to be
Your sincere friend
and affect[iona]te Sister
M. Ridgely

March 22 I have not heard from home since this was written but hope I shall this Even[in]g. I was at the Theatre, one of Thompson's plays was acted, shockingly murdered indeed. Adieu. Write soon.

[*Addressed to* Henry Moore Ridgely
Lancaster, Pennsylvania]

Philadelphia April 1, 1798

I cannot my d[ea]r Harry let Mr. Smith return to Lancaster without thanking you for your Last Epistle receiv'd a day or two ago and am extremely happy to hear you say will give me letter for letter. As this is the case, I most certainly will send you one a week while here. Yet that perhaps may not be a week longer. Mr. Bayard has been persuading me to go down on Saturday with him to Wilmington and stay with Mrs. Bayard till the New Castle court is over, which will be two weeks. I must confess I w[oul]d rather continue the greatest part of those two weeks here and return to Wilmington a few days before the Court breaks up. However, I am not determin'd yet. You know I never know my own mind five minutes together. However write to me, at this place, 'tis most probable I shall be here to receive your letters.

Thursday Morn[in]g the Presid[en]t of the United States was thrown from his horse. Thank Heav[e]n he receiv'd no injury. Friday I saw him at the Drawing room, quite well. Last even[in]g I was at a large tea party at the Chev[alier] de Frirris' and tho' we had no fire was half roasted. We had, I suppose, a hundred and thirty or forty people there, quite enough to warm two rooms. Tomorrow I am oblig'd to go to a Ball at Mr. Liston's. I am sure if 'tis as warm as 'tis today I will not dance one single step. 'Tis too late in the Season for such frolics. Wednesday I go to the Play I believe for the last time this year. This will be a very short letter. We expect company to dinner and more to Tea. I have just written a long letter to Mama and 'tis late.

The Jones's have mov'd to Sipple's house. They are people who wou[l]d always require a guardian.

Remember your promise of answering every letter. Adieu.

May every blessing attend you

M. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Henry M. Ridgely
Lancaster, Penna.]

Philadelphia, April 27, 1798

Yesterday, my dear Harry, I bought you six pairs of Stockings, four pair of Cotton and two pair of Silk. They are the most fashionable kind and I

hope will meet your approbation. I am now marking them; when they are finished I shall send them to Dunwoody, and beg he will send them to Lancaster to you. This I send by Mail that you may see after your Stockings. They are shockingly marked, but you must excuse, I am in a hurry as I wish to send them Tomorrow if possible. I hope you will be kind enough to let me know as soon as possible whether you have receiv'd them and how you like them. The French take so many of our Vessels that good[s] are scarcely to be got tolerably cheap. The *William Penn* was taken a few days ago, and indeed there is no safety for any Ship now. 'Tis distressing indeed. The Pres[iden]t receiv'd a letter a few days ago, inform[in]g him that some wretches intended setting fire to the City in four places at once and blowing up his house. 'Twas said to come from one of the Gang who repented. Most people laugh at this, but some are alarmed; however, perhaps it ought not be mentioned. We had a dreadful fire a short time since in the lower part of the Town, several homes were burnt and much damage done by it. Tho it was a great way from us it was so light that the houses were quite illuminated, and the clouds appeared like clouds of fire above us. The People are such good Federalists that they will have no tune in the Theatre but Washington's March. There has been several uproars at having a French tune play'd; they will have none but American. All the *Demoes* are changed (Bache excepted and one or two more). I was at the Theatre one Even[in]g and the People were so clamorous and loud for Washington's March that I thought the house w[oul]d have come down, and 'twas played three times over. The famous *New England Man* tune is the rage. I have become one of the greatest walkers you ever saw. Every day I walk with the Miss Gibsons before breakfast to Schuylkill. This Morn[in]g we all walked to Mr. Meridith's Farm and back again before eight oclock; 'tis two miles and a half from Town, give me credit for a good walker, won't you. I have rode twice on horseback, too, lately, once with Tom Cad, about ten days ago, and Wednesday Morn[in]g I rode all along the Canal attended by Tom Meridith and young Heath. I w[oul]d not ride alone on any account, *particularly* when *half a doz[e]n beg leave to ride with me.* Sunday I intend trying it again. Tom Cadwalader is at present at his Uncle's in Trenton; he has been very unwell and went there to recruit. Sunday week we expect him home. I intend in less than three weeks to return to Kent. I don't suppose I shall relish it very much; however, I always have lov'd home so far of my life. White was in Phila-

delphia a short time ago; he told me the Jones's had moved to Sipple's Farm some time. I think they are crazy indeed. I am in hopes we shall be happy enough to get George placed with Mr. Blight, an Englishman highly recommended by Mr. Travis and Mr. Bond. He said he w[oul]d positively promise to take him if he knew what kind of a hand he wrote. I am really afraid when he sees it he will refuse him. George has stood very much in his own light indeed. I wish he w[oul]d try to improve himself. Yesterday a British Ship [at] Pine Street Wharf hoisted her colors in honor of one of her own Ships or something I don't know what, about the British, and w[oul]d you believe it, a Frenchman had the audacity to go down, walk calmly up and take hold of the colours in order to pull them down. The Mate happened to see him, call[ed] one or two of the Sailors, hoisted him up and thank Heav'n gave him a complete Whipping—so much for his impudence. I wish to Heav'n they were, every French *Demo*, at the bottom of the Sea or anywhere else but in this World. I am sure they are not fit to live. You promised to write me letter for letter, how well you have kept your promise you already know. Let me know how you like your Stockings.

Adieu, my dear Harry,
Yours affect[ionate]ly, M.R.

[*Addressed to* H. M. Ridgely
Lancaster, Pennsylvania]

Philadelphia, May 9, 1798

The family at home, I thought, wrote to you very frequently—they do to me, and often mention you in their letters. I rejoice your stockings please you and am astonish'd how my letter was so long in reaching you, as I sent it at the same time I did your stockings. You say you thought I was gone down. I have indeed lengthen'd my visit out most monstrously but if the affairs of the Country are such as will admit of Mr. Bayard leaving Cong[res]s I go down with him on Saturday Morn[in]g as far as Wilmington in the Stage, and on Sunday we continue our Journey to Dover in his carriage. If he can't leave Cong[res]s I shall wait for George to gallant me home. If I sh[oul]d go on Saturday I will write a line to bid you adieu. Mr. Bayard has a fine Daughter.

Mama mention'd in a letter I receiv'd yesterday noon that Mrs. Ridgely was ill, the rest of our friends well. I can't say that the idea of returning af-

fords me any pleasure. The City is more agreeable than it has been at all to me.

I have heard today that the British took lately 40 Transports on their way here, from France. God grant it may be true.

Today was fast day—I can't say I fasted, but I went to Church. This is the night which 'tis said, is to see Philadelphia laid in Ashes. For my part I am not afraid.

Tom Cad. return'd today from Trenton, where he has been some weeks for his health, which is much improv'd.

The other day I took a long ride on horseback. I went to the Falls of Schuykill and was much pleased with them. Yesterday I visited the Woodlands and never saw anything more perfectly beautiful than the appearance which the river makes from there. I saw several carriages pass over the Bridge at Gray's and really was so enchanted I cou[l]d have stayed till this time looking at the beauties of nature and art together. Adieu for the present, I must go dress for the Even[in]g.

May 13. Tomorrow my D[ea]r Harry I set off for home—I confess with great reluctance. The City is now extremely pleasant. I have become much attract'd to it, and the number of agreeable acquaintances which I have form'd this Winter and Spring does not render my departure more pleasing. I know it is my duty to go home but really I had rather live here on bread and water than give up the society I enjoy here.

George came up for me on Wednesday, which prevented my going down with Mr. Bayard yesterday, as I expected. He also expected it and came ready to take me, in a chair. Yesterday afternoon I rode 15 or 20 miles on horseback with Tom Cad. and Mr. Harper and really feel a little fatigu'd this Morn[in]g.

I suppose you have seen an account of the Duel which lately took place at New York, a Mr. Jones of that place was unfortunately kill'd by Mr. Livingston. We had one here a few days since between Harry Nixon and Darby a young Englishman. They quarrel'd about England and America but did no harm altho they both fired twice.

Write soon to me pray. All our friends in Kent are well. Adieu.

Yours most affectionately

M. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* H. M. Ridgely
Lancaster, Pennsylvania]

Dover, May 10th 1798

My Dear Brother,

Certain that you will forgive my long silence I again venture to address a letter to you, for if I supposed you would lecture I should be almost tempted to withhold my pen, so much afraid am I of a scolding. Yesterday morning George went off for Philadelphia with an intention of accompanying Mary home, tho' if Mr. Blight and he should happen to be mutually pleased perhaps he may continue there and Mary come down with some other person, as there are several people from this neighborhood up. Heaven grant George may be lucky enough to stay with Blight for by all accounts it must be one of the very best places in the City. As to the Study of Law he is positively against it; you know in his infant days he try'd many professions and trades but never took to that. No doubt you have seen the address of the Philadelphia Youth to the President and his answer. There were a thousand young Men assembled on that occasion; four hundred waited on Mr. Adams. I admire both their and his speech vastly. Mary was at the Theatre the night he went and she said nothing would be more grateful and affecting to an American heart than the applause of the audience, the Federal song being unanimously sung and encored three times. John Adams was huzza'd for nine times while in the house and a great number of gentlemen with all the Actors serenaded him after he got home and sang the Federal Song and Yanky doodle and called out "long live Adams." I forgot to tell you when that verse of the song which says "Sound, Sound the Trump of fame to Washington's great name" was repeated there was a trumpet sounded and the whole theatre reechoed.

A propos—Miss Custis is going to be married to young Carrol, who has a most amiable character, has been educated in Europe, and is the only Son of Charles Carrol of Maryland who it is said has an estate of between 20 and 30,000 a year, and has but two daughters who I believe are married. If all this sh[oul]d be true Miss Custis will do pretty well. Yesterday being fast day it was observed here I believe generally. The Methodists had a sermon in their meeting by Mr. Durborough. I was there and I assure you it was very well suited to the occasion and as much in the political way as you may imagine. He read the proclamation at the beginning and went thro' with apparent patriotism and zeal. Even the Hymns, were patriotic. Captain Vining and his company with the Fife and colours attended and the house was almost as full as at a quarterly meeting. An address to the

President was sent up yesterday from this place. You'll think I've turned politician—indeed it seems quite fashionable for the Americans to have one mind. May it continue to be always the case, particularly when our enemies think of invading us. At such a time even the women and children might be allowed to become patriots. You are such a one yourself that I think you must agree with me. The Episcopal Clergyman Mr. Reese is to give us a Sermon on next Sunday for the first time. I think he ought to have done it yesterday. As Mamma wishes to add a few lines I must finish this scrawl which is scarcely legible—my excuse is a bad pen—the *common one.*

May you be happy is the constant prayer of your affectionate Sister and sincere friend,

WILLIAMINA RIDGELY.

By a letter from Mary on Tuesday last I hear you have, my dear Harry, rec[eive]d the stock[in]gs and that you are pleased with them. I am sorry to tell you that the Linnen for your shirts, tho' I wrote for it the very day after you mentioned to me that you wanted them, never was sent from the city till last Monday, nor have I yet rec[eive]d it from the Shallop. However, you may depend on it that no time shall be lost in having them ready as soon as poss[ible to] send. I hope you will have two at least in a w[eek or] ten days. I sh[oul]d write oftener to you than I do if it were in my power but I have lately had an inflammation in one of my eyes that has made it painful to me yet, to wear my spectacles and you know I have long been incapable of seeing at all without them. Willy has s[ai]d all I know worth your hearing from here. Heaven bless you, my D[ear] Son! With best regards to all our friends at Lancaster, I am as ever

Your truly affectionate Mother,
A. RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Henry Moore Ridgely
Lancaster, Pennsylvania]

Plumley May 26th 1798

Dear Harry,

I received a Letter from you in February, but not since. The last I wrote to you was in April.

For Want of something better I will give you an Extract from a Letter I received from Tom lately, Dated May 9th "I have taken this Day pro-

claimed by our *religious* President as a day of 'Thanksgiving, Fasting and Humiliation' to write to you and I don't think I shall be interrupted—but I think that this is pretty well—that he has involved himself and us and now forsooth *we* must pray for him and ourselves. Had it been a Day appointed at any other Time I should not have thought so much of it, but now when they, the Pres[ident] and his Collegues, Curse light upon them for it, have got us upon the brink of a War, he must proclaim a Fast for us to get clear of it—high Work!!! Fast yourself old Fellow."

This is much in the old Style, but I do not much like to hear Friend Tom throwing so much Blame on the President. From all accounts that I have seen, his Conduct has hitherto been unexceptionable; if in anything he has been to blame, it is, through his great desire of preserving Peace, by making too great Concessions to our treacherous Friends. I suppose you have seen *The Paris Monster*.

John is now in Newark and has been nearly two Weeks, occasioned by his Employer being out of Paper. I have not seen him since he went to Philad[elphi]a, but have heard from him frequently. Sam Stevens is in Philad[elphi]a.

In your next let me know whether you propose going to Carlisle, in September, to see the Commencement or not. If you do I hope we shall have the Pleasure of going up together. Morrow from S. Carolina died some time ago, at Carlisle, of the Small-Pox, which he took in the natural Way; he boarded at Mrs. Patten's. This is the same Person that came to Carlisle about this Time last year and went away through Fear of the Small-Pox. He returned again last Fall. Knight and another of Mr. Patten's Men were innoculated and have recovered.

I send this by Judge Henry. Remember my Co[mplimen]ts to Passmore, Moses & Frazier; & to conclude in the words of Tom, I am

to the Antepodean Regions
Your Humble Serv[an]t
JAMES THOMSON

P. S. Please to take care of
the inclosed.

[*Addressed to* Henry M. Ridgely
Student-at-law
Lancaster, Pennsylvania]

Sunday 27th May 1798.

My Dear Harry

I have lately been too much indisposed to write more than a few lines at a time, and have, therefore now and then written only at the bottom of the letters you have rec[eive]d from your Sisters. This Morn[in]g as the rest of the family are all preparing for Church, I intend to employ in scribling to you but, as I have a very sore finger w[hi]ch has for 10 days past occasioned me extreme pain, I fear I shall not be able to think of any thing very pleasing to tell you, except that we abound, at present, in green peas and charming Strawberries, w[hi]ch we very much regret that it is impossible to send you a share of.

Your Sister Mary return'd on Tuesday week. She has spent the winter gaily—this I suppose you have found from her letters to you while she was in the City. I think such a life as the fashionable World now leads would be very far from a pleasing one to me, and if I was worth ten thousand a year, I am very sure I should prefer a Country education for my children. Do not think, from this, that I w[oul]d chuse my daughters mere joans or my Sons clowns; I could not endure such a thought. I w[oul]d desire both to be truly polite, and thoroughly instructed in every branch of education that could render them genteel, agreeable, sensible, and ev'ry way elegantly accomplish'd, and I cannot suppose it impossible to have them thus polish'd without being divested of the sweet, innocent, engaging simplicity and industry of the peasant, despising extravagance, affectation, and frippery of all kinds. . . .

You have never yet mentioned a syllable in any of your letters that could lead us to guess whether you were pleas'd or not with the study of the Law. If I had rec[eive]d no acc[oun]t of you except from your own letters I sh[oul]d have been uneasy at this but from some thing Mr. Yeates s[ai]d to a friend of mine at Philad[elphia] and what your cousin (Mr. Smith) said to Mary I am in great hopes that you are perfectly satisfied with the choice you have made of a profession and that you will omit no opportunity of improving. But let me entreat you my son not to sit too much. You may read standing up full as well, or walking slowly. And pray remember that stoop[in]g is as great an enemy to health as to gracefulness of person and, if you have any regard for me I am sure, as I now make it a

request, that you will try to be as erect as you can, to *be* and to *look* easy. . . .

Heaven bless you!

Your ever affectionate mother,

A. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Mr. Henry M. Ridgely
Lancaster
Pennsylvania]

In 1798 rumours of war had reached Dover, arousing a wave of patriotism. A letter from the Green states, "the sound of drums disturbs the air and breaks the serenity of living."

Dover, June 18, 1798

Tho' you my D[ea]r Harry are several letters in my debt I will not be so ceremonious as to neglect writing to you on that account, tho' really I know not what to say. One only subject engrosses my whole soul and that is my Country. This I am sure you will think an odd one for a Woman. Wou[l]d to Heav[e]n I was a Man or that it was customary for the female World to shoulder a musket and march in defense of their Country. I own myself an enthusiast in the cause of my Country and declare solemnly (if it was proper) nothing w[oul]d afford me so much delight as being a *Soldier*. You my dear Brother I am sure will be amongst the first to rally round the Standard of Liberty. You have always express'd your ideas with regard to being a soldier in such terms as convinces me nothing will ever make you flinch. Most sincerely do I wish you were in the company of Grenadiers of Philadelphia. There is not to be a man under five feet ten in the company. A number of gentlemen I am acquainted with are in the set. Two Brothers who I am well acquainted with are of the number. Indeed they were almost the first who mentioned having such a company. One of them is six feet seven inches high, the other six feet and nearly one inch, both handsome. I think no man under six feet should be in the Corps. Tom Cadwalader is in a Troup of horse and delighted with the name of Soldier. I receiv'd a letter from his Sister last night. She indeed appears to have caught the infection, for her letter is quite a patriotic one. All the young

men of my acquaintance in Philadelphia are in some company or other. I believe I wrote you word I saw them when they march'd to present their address to the President of the United States. Have you seen the President's answer to the young men of Boston. He says, "to Arms—to Arms my young friends." May you my dear Harry shine (if there should be occasions) in them. Try to imitate the two first and most glorious men on Earth, Washington and Adams. Mama has given you Liberty to do whatever you think proper in the Bustle. I hope you will never omit an opportunity of improving yourself in the exercises of a SOLDIER for I think an awkward one must be a distressing sight, but I am not the least affraid of your being one of this description. I know your Temper too well to suppose you will be inactive at this time.

Your friends are all well and desire a great deal of love to you. Mama and Willy are just going to Vinings. Poor Mrs. V. lost her Father on yesterday week.

Mrs. Wharton (our relation) is dead. This I think a blessing.

I hope you have mounted a black Cockade. Everybody here wears one, even Brother N. I mean to put one on my riding hat. I don't see any reason why we should not wear them.

Miss Bingham of Philadelphia is shortly to be married to Alexander Browning, an Englishman, who is to drop his own name and take hers. I think he must be a poor creature—indeed I never thought very much of him in my life.

I beg of you my d[ea]r Harry to burn this. My pen is dreadful and I am in a great Hurry. My constant prayer will be for your safety and honor. May you when call'd into the field show yourself a true American. That I think includes everything that is amiable on Earth. Led on by the Glorious Washington I make not the least doubt on Earth but our Troops will be victorious. And may my d[ea]r Brothers return to their friends crown'd with Laurels, won by the side of our ever honour'd Chief. Heav[e]n approving, and Washington in view, you cannot fail to conquer those detestable Frenchmen who honour neither God or man.

Adieu my dear Harry. This letter I am afraid you will not be able to read. My feelings must plead my excuse.

Your affectionate Sister,

M. R.

I have heard Gen[era]l Washington has offered to command the Army if agreeable.

[*Addressed to* Henry M. Ridgely
Lancaster
Pennsylvania]

No doubt uniforms were as attractive to the female of the species then, as they are today, and Harry, being a susceptible young gentleman, probably felt that the girls at Lancaster gave a great deal of attention to those wearing them. Perhaps, for this reason he grew restless in the study of law, and wrote his mother he should like to enter the Army. Ann, as usual, kept her head and, in a letter written June 26, 1798, gave her son excellent advice, at the same time consoling his vanity by sending him fine linen shirts. We note that this letter went by post directly from Philadelphia to Lancaster, one of the family having taken it on the first part of its journey.

26th June 1798.

My dear Harry

I have rec[eive]d yours of the 18th Instant, and shall now inclose you a Bank Bill of 30 Dollars which is almost the last farthing I can command at this time. I shall also send you by the same opportunity (the Mail) four shirts. You will find them perfectly plain and as it is altogether the fashion to wear them so, I hope you will approve it.

I find by your two last letters that you are very desirous of entering into the Army. I am sorry to add that I find my answer to the first of those letters has had little weight, but, if you have carefully perus'd the President's answer to the young men of Dartmouth University, you have, by this time I make no doubt, found out that your Mother, tho' only an old woman, has, fortunately for once, happen'd to give an opinion which ought to be deem'd of some moment; as it is exactly similar to that of a great, a good, and a wise man. You say you can study at a future period. Perhaps you may be mistaken in this; you may, and probably w[oul]d, loose all inclination for study if you were *now* to enter into other pursuits. You are now in the habit of reading, and at that time of life generally allow'd to be best

adapted to the acquirement of knowledge. Therefore, unless compell'd by cruel necessity, you should not loose a single hour. Every profession requires study—a man cannot become a brave and gallant officer without it, And—can you, who have an excellent disposition, and have rec[eive]d a liberal education, be reconcil'd to the idea of engaging in the Army as an officer, while totally ignorant of the duties of such a station, or even of those of a common soldier? Oh my Son! Never, never, if you wish to be belov'd, honour'd and respected, or to make your Mother bless the day that gave you birth, undertake any thing, before you have made yourself capable of performing ev'ry duty your station may require. You will not be nineteen years of age 'till the 6th day of August next. This is an early age to give up the study of the Law, a profession which you have invariably avow'd it was your choice to pursue; Your prospects, if you continue to study that, are perhaps as favourable as any young man at your time of life c[oul]d wish for. Therefore it is my wish that you sh[oul]d continue your present pursuits. I do not wish tho' that you sh[oul]d read Law only, as I told you in my last letter, nor w[oul]d I chuse you to continue ignorant of the duties of a soldier. On the contrary, I earnestly wish you to embrace ev'ry opportunity of learning the usual exercise, and of becoming perfect in it. And pray remember, that in well disciplin'd Armies, it is always a rule (so I have been inform'd from very good authority) in the first place to make ev'ry man stand as upright as possible, so as not to loose a hair's breadth of his natural height. No man can acquire a military air, or look like a brave man sh[oul]d look, if this is disregarded.

From what I have said above, and indeed from the advice I have always offer'd to my children, if you will recollect, I think you will perceive that it is, and has ever been, my wish to have them prepar'd as well as possible for all events. I own Peace is my most earnest wish, but, if our Country sh[oul]d be invaded I had rather die ten thousand times than live to see my Sons backward in offering their services to repell the attempts of the base and faithless Nation who has dar'd to threaten it. But I w[oul]d have you consider that if America sh[oul]d be under the necessity of fighting to maintain her just rights when invaded by a set of such monsters as the French appear to be at this time, the contest will not probably be soon ended and persons of your age and with your prospects of improvement w[oul]d do better perhaps by continuing now to study and improve them-

selves, because in that case it would enable them at a more distant period to render such service as would be doubly useful to what they can possibly render now.

Heaven bless you, my son! Remember, that all my happiness, and all the grief of my days to come on earth, depends on the conduct of my Children. For I am indeed

Your truly affectionate Mother
A. Ridgely

P.S.

I shall wrap your shirts up carefully and order them to be put into the Mail. I inclose the money in this letter and shall inclose a little note with y[ou]r linnen. I beg you will be as economical as possible for it is utterly impossible for any body in this place to obtain money. There is not even a years interest to be got on even small sums.

Since writing the above y[ou]r Sister Mary tells me that the postage costs more than they are worth, if I sh[oul]d have them sent . . . I must therefore wait 'till some neighbour may be going who will be kind enough to take them to Mr. Dunwoody [for] him to forward them to you at Lancaster. I hope it will not be many days before I meet with such an opportunity.

Nancy wrote you on Sunday last and Mary on Sunday week. Write as soon as you receive this to some of us. As you owe letters to all I think Willy sh[oul]d be first paid. She made your shirts and George an equal number. I have since writing the above bethought myself that [you]r Brother Nick is to set off tomorrow for N[ew] Castle and he has promis'd to take up the Bundle and send it from there to Dunwoody's care. I hope you will receive it with this letter by the next Post that leaves Philad[elphia] for Lancaster after this arrives in that city, but may be you will not get it so soon as 'tis probable the person he may send it by will be oblig'd to attend some days at the Federal Court which he is going to.

[*Addressed to* Mr. Henry Moore Ridgely
Lancaster
Pennsylvania]

Henry came home to stay about August, 1798. The reason is not entirely explained. His mother had taken him seriously to task for ex-

travagance just before then. There is also some evidence that he was ill about this time. After his recovery he continued his law studies in Dover with his half-brother, Nicholas. In January, 1799, he travelled up to Wilmington with his sister Nancy and wrote his mother on the 18th of that month:

Wilmington Jan[uar]y 18th–99

Dear Mother

We arrived here in good time without any accident happening. Nancy is now safely lodged at Mrs. Vinings. Mrs. V. and her family are very well. Mr. Bayard goes to the City tomorrow or the next day as I hear Mrs. John Vinings brothers are in this town and go over to Dover tomorrow. I have nothing more to tell you of except that we had the stage to ourselves almost all the way.

Yours affectionately
H. M. Ridgely

And to this letter Ann, his sister, added a short postscript:

Harry came last night as I expected, but can't take your cloak in his trunk, and I have nothing to wrap it up in, so I shall keep it till I return.

I have dream't of you every night since I left you.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
near Dover
Delaware
Mr. H. M. Ridgely]

Philadelphia July 14, 1800

Dear Ridgely,

Though I am not fond of prefaces, I must request you not to expect or look for a single idea in this scrawl. I have been thinking a good while and endeavoring to muster something worth writing, but find all my efforts ineffectual. Whether the excessive heat of the weather for some days has rendered me more stupid than usual, or not, I won't pretend to determine. I know the fact but cannot explain it. I have not even a little news to tell you, for you know as well as I that Betsy Hughes is married to Lieut. Potts. I suppose you saw Potts when in Carlisle, and know that he is very handsome, and have heard that he is a good deal of a rake.

In two weeks from the date of this letter, I hope to be in Carlisle. It would give me great pleasure to hear from you before I leave the City and to be the bearer of a line from you too.

In my last I forgot to ask you how you happened to become a debtor to me. If it is in the way of postage it is so trifling as not to be worth mentioning. If you refer to Mr. Lewis Benn I hope you will not affront me by taking any notice of it, for if you do I know how to be even with you.

The trustees of the University of Pa. are about to purchase the house built for the President of United States, and convert it into a college.

I have stretched my letter to a greater length than I expected which verifies the proverb, "Magna oriuntur ex parvis initiis."

I remain
your friend
JAMES THOMSON

P. S. On the 4th of July Jonathan Meredith, a member of the Washington Society, composed of a number of lads in this City, delivered an oration in the college hall, on the Origin of American Independence. Previous to the delivery of the oration another member of the Society *read* the Declaration of Independence by Congress. The Rev. Dr. Andrews, V.P. of the University of Pa. and the Rev. James Abercrombie of Philadelphia Academy requested that it should not be read. The youths persisted in their intention and the two gentlemen above mentioned, being high-flying federalists, did not make their appearance in the Hall till the reading was ended. The oration was very well delivered and the composition was pretty good.

[*Addressed to* Henry M. Ridgely
Student-at-Law
Dover, Delaware]

Jacob and Janet Jones

NO narrative of the Ridgely connection is complete without a record of Janet Moore, Ann Ridgely's niece, and her husband, Commodore Jacob Jones.

Ann and her brother, Thomas William, were children of Judge William Moore of Moore Hall near Valley Forge, a vestryman of old St. David's church at Radnor, where his remains and those of his wife, Williamina Wemyss, repose in the vestibule of the church.

William Moore was a hot-tempered Tory. He did, it is true, protest against the act of England in closing the port of Boston, but he would have been thrown into an apoplexy had his son Thomas William Moore fought against the Crown. At what date his son left America for England we do not know, but there he went to live and there he brought up his children. He had married a widow whose first husband was a physician in the British Navy. In the course of time His Majesty's Government sent him to America as Consul at New Port, Rhode Island. There his wife joined him and soon after, his daughter Janet, who had been educated in England.

Thomas William, or William as he was usually called, had been Ann's playmate at Moore Hall and, after the difficult years of war were over, he again wrote to her. An active correspondence followed and Ann Ridgely's children were invited to visit their uncle and aunt at New Port. As we have read in former pages, the visit was made after lengthy preparations. All the plans for wardrobes and conveyances were furthered by Williamina Cadwalader in Philadelphia. It was suggested that the girls go with their cousin by carriage from Philadelphia to New York, as they could not "with comfort or propriety travel in the common stage," even with a male relative in attendance.

On their journey they visited their cousins, the Setons in New York, and made a trip by ferry to "the pretty little village of Brooklyn," where the Sands, their Aunt Moore's relatives, lived. On their return from the visit to New Port they brought Janet Moore with them. After a stormy voyage from New Port to New York, they came to Amboy where they left the boat, and finally to Philadelphia where they

stopped with their cousins, the Cadwaladers, and at their Aunt Bond's. From Philadelphia they came by stage to Dover. All this in 1795.

At Philadelphia or maybe at New Castle, a young gentleman joined the passengers on the stage, Jacob Jones. He was handsome and had accomplished manners. He made an impression on Janet. Her cousin Mary called her plain, but Jacob thought her fair hair and grey eyes fascinating.

Jacob was a young widower and had found Dover lonely since the death of his bride. His birthplace was but a few miles from Dover. He had lost his mother when an infant and his father had married a second wife, a girl from Sussex. When Jacob was but four years old his father died, and his stepmother took him to live in her old home, at Lewes. She was a daughter of Rives Holt, a distinguished jurist, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Delaware State, and was herself a well-educated woman.

She tutored the lad, to whom she was devoted, and when he grew older she placed him under Dr. Matthew Wilson to study Greek, Latin and Geography. Lewes, on the shore of the Delaware Bay where it meets the Atlantic, probably delighted Jacob. Ships came to anchor in the bay after an exciting and often perilous voyage across the great ocean. The lure of the sea was there and he felt it.

However, when he had finished his studies with Dr. Matthew Wilson he went to Dover to study medicine with Dr. Sykes, physician and surgeon, who lived on Dover Green in a house formerly the home of Samuel Chew. Today the State Law Library is on the site of this house. He was with the doctor four years and then had two terms in the medical school of the University of Pennsylvania. He had meanwhile found time to fall in love. He had a way with the ladies and he soon won the hand of the doctor's young sister. They were married, and life was delightful for a few brief months, when the young wife died.

Without his wife Jacob no longer felt at home with Dr. Sykes. The study and practice of medicine became distasteful to him. He decided to abandon it and to read law. The very air of the Green was redolent with the odor of sheepskin. Surrounding the Court House were offices where row upon row of law books testified to the studious lawyers

who often pored over them by candlelight, or read on summer days out under the old trees. The signs that hung out of the brick buildings carried the names of most of the families of Dover: Vining, Bassett, Rodney, Fisher, Wilson, Clayton, Ridgely, Killen, Reed. Jacob registered as a law student with Nicholas Ridgely. Governor Clayton appointed him clerk of the Supreme Court. Alas, the law proved as unsatisfying as had physic—dry, dusty, not at all to his taste.

He was given to riding, so dropping his book or pen, he would gallop away to the bay, six miles to the east. Not infrequently a sloop or frigate passed not far off the shore of Kent, perhaps bound on an errand for the Navy. War was in the air.

Like his namesake, Jacob was a dreamer. White sails carrying America's freight or America's men to other lands were of the fabric of his dream. Why not follow his dream; why not serve his country; why not enter the Navy?

He was pursuing these thoughts when he met Janet. Often, after she came, he rode to the edge of the village where the lane began that led to Eden Hill. Between the cedar trees he rode up to the house where Janet was perhaps expecting him. Presently her Aunt Ann became alarmed. She felt that Jacob, unstable in his previous callings, might well be a philanderer. She forbade Janet riding out with Jacob and wrote to the girl's father to come and forbid the courtship or else to sanction it and himself give away the bride.

20th March. 1796

Dear Brother

I really supposed you jesting when you said in your letter by your daughter that if she could get a husband here you should have no objection. The fact is that she is now like to do so and last evening informed me that she was engag'd to a Mr. Jacob Jones of this place. I confess I was surpriz'd to find a matter of such consequence determined on without the consent of her parents, and told her so, her reply was that you had, five or six years ago, told her you should leave such matters totally to her own discretion and should never attempt to object to any gentleman she should approve. She is now I believe writing to you and her mother on the subject. I find she is determined for she said last night that tho' she had be-

fore met with many offers and some of them from men of fortune she never had seen the person before that she could love. She requested me to write to you but really I know not what to say except that I think an answer to her letter should be forward'd as soon as possible for she tells me that Mr. Jones intends taking a house in Dover as soon as he can get one that will suit them, and that tho' the day is not set she thinks the matter will be concluded by the middle of May. Mr. Jones is a widower of 25 or 26 years of age, rather comely, and I believe, he has a most excellent temper. He married between three and four years ago Miss Sykes, of Dover, and while she liv'd, which was about eight months, he was esteem'd a very tender and affectionate husband. His acquaintance with Jane commenced on the journey from Philadelphia to this place in November last, since which time he has very frequently visited at my house and appear'd rather particular to Jane, but, 'till last night, when she inform'd me of her engagement, I most sincerely declare I never knew that he courted her. I thought indeed in a very little time after she came that she prefer'd his company to that of any other person in this place & once on her requesting that I would consent to her taking a ride on horse back, with him for a gallant, I took the liberty of refusing positively and of saying that Mr. Jones had the character of a rake. After Mr. Jones had finish'd his education he was placed with Dr. Sykes (Brother of the lady he married) to study Physic. He was there nearly four years, and attended the lectures, I believe two seasons at Philadelphia; yet he would never practice. After the death of his wife he attempted to read Law with my son, Nicholas Ridgely, but he soon laid that aside. After that he had an office, Clerk of the Court, or some such thing, I do not rightly know what it was, but I have hear'd he never would attend to the business. Now he is in partnership with one Boyer in a store in Dover. In short, he is not a man of fortune; he is not a man of business. He has a small farm about 12 or 13 miles from this place, but I know not the worth of it or anything else relating to Mr. Jones' circumstances more than I have said above. He is genteel, obliging, good temper'd, and I have heard a man of undoubt'd spirit. Now what say you? Answer Jane's letter as soon as possible, and remember that let what will happen, I am blameless. I have told you all I know or have heard and in time too. Jane has written to intreat you will approve; she tells me, and that you will come and give her away. Judge you, of the propriety of this match, and if you ap-

prove or whether you do or not pray either come yourself or tell my sister I intreat that she will. If you consent come at least one of you to see her married or come and prevent the wedding if you wish it should not be.

Your ever truly affectionate Sister
A. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Thomas William Moore Esquire.
N. Port
Rhode Island]

New Port 5th. April 1796

My dear Nancy

Your very kind & affectionate letter of the 20th ultimo ' received last post & sincerely thank you for the candid account given of Mr. J. Jones as well as your conversation with Janet on that topic. It is certainly true that I gave Jane free liberty to choose a husband, believing that she had sense enough to make a proper choice, & would not throw herself away on a man who could not support her! On this liberty she has launch'd her boat, fearless of storms & tempest (which God avert) & by her letter to me is determin'd to be united to Mr. Jones "the only man on earth she can love"—very pretty! Tis true she asks her mother's & my consent to the union, & begs that one of us will be present. *That* my dear sister is impossible; I am to abide where I am untill I receive my Royal Master's order to move elsewhere, & those orders may arrive tomorrow. Mrs. Moore will not quit me whilst I stay in America so that neither of us can possibly attend. Accept our thanks for your kind invitation and as Mrs. M. will be left behind in case I am order'd to London, she will make a visit to Dover, but when it is as before said uncertain; for these reasons then we do not desire to retard the union, but request that you will have the goodness to give her away with our blessings to each and may God in his great goodness prosper them thro' life. I have requested Mr. Bond to advance One Hundred Dollars to purchase such necessaries as may be wanted & Becky Bond if you wish it will take that trouble. My present situation is such that I cannot advance a greater sum, & both her mother & I think she is at present very well stock'd with cloathes. Above every thing my dear Sister, let it be a *private wedding*—no feasting—no fuss. It will be in the extreme ridiculous for people of little or no fortune to ape the pomp & shew of wealth & abundance. I write by this conveyance to Janet & refer her to you for the perusal

of this. Mrs. M. writes with me in all good wishes for yourself & Family & I am with the greatest affection

My Dear Sister
Your truly affectionate
THOMAS W. MOORE

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Anne Ridgely
Dover
Delaware State]

9th April 1796

My dear Brother

I was very much disappointed last evenin'g in not having letters from you by the Post. I wrote you fully the very day after Jane informed me of her engagement to Mr. Jones, and communicated to you as much as I knew of his history, I entreated you to write by the very first Post after receiving my letter, and left *you* to judge of the propriety of such a match. I have not anything to do in the matter, Jane has always told me that you never offer'd to controul her inclinations, and I am sorry to say she pays very little, indeed no regard, to my advice or opinions. I cannot help adding that I am hurt by this conduct, as I never before had any young person in my family who did not implicity conform to my rules and directions. My words have been a law to my children in particular, and when I solicited the company of my brother's daughter I expected she would have behav'd in the same way. Believe me, my Dear Brother when I assure you that nothing but the extreme uneasiness I feel could have induced me to write to you in this manner. I would do anything in my power to contribute to your happiness, but I know it is my duty to keep up order in my family because the future welfare of my own children depends on it. I entreat you to write to me as soon as possible, and write to Jane also. Do not take notice of my having mentioned the ungovernable disposition she has betray'd towards me, but answer, as you think proper, her letter respect'g her engagement with Mr. Jones. If you approve the match advise her to finish the matter as soon as convenient, for to tell you the truth, I cannot consent to her riding and walking about my neighbourhood, with him or any other man, and that I find she is determin'd to do (not withstanding all I can possibly urge against it) as often as she pleases; before she told me she was engaged to him, I did not know that he address'd her. I heard him talking to her one even'g about riding out with him the next day, and

told him then positively, that she should not. Several times I took the same liberty on like occasions, but since she told me of the engagement she has never let me know when they intend'd to ride till he would be at the door with a horse ready for her. In all this time he has never mentioned a word to me about the match. I remind'd her of this and said I was surprised at it. She answer'd that he wish'd to do it but she would not let him for *she thought* it much more proper to mention it herself. He, she says, is in hopes of getting a house soon. I beseach you to write soon and fully. I hope, if it is by any means convenient to my sister to come early in May, that she will be here by that time. Give my love to her and Nancy Campbell in which my children join with duty to their Aunt and you.

I am my dear brother
Your truely affectionate
A. Ridgely

P. S.

If you have inclosed letters to John Vining lately 'tis probable they will continue at Philadelphia all summer. The best way is to send letters through by the Post, in that case we receive letters from New Port here in 8 or 9 days regularly.

I have lately had some reason to think that Jones intends visiting you this summer after his marriage. This will be an expense which he may probably not have calculated on exactly as may be necessary in his circumstances.

[*Addressed to* Thomas William Moore Esquire
Copy by MR]

New Port 24th. April 1796

My dear Sister

You have e'er this received the letters I wrote in answer to all your obliging favors, and I sincerely hope Janet is by this married. She has made her *own bed* may it be a comfortable one. I am much hurt by the account you give me of the conduct of *a certain person* who must now be nameless & as you enjoin my silence on that head I shall be mute. I hope she will see her error. She certainly loves you as a mother, & speaks of you in most endearing terms. Let me then beg of you to continue your instructions & for a little while, your *motherly* affection, as I am going off in a few days for London, so that I shall not have the happiness of hearing from you in

this country. Mrs. M. will remain on Long Island 'till she hears from me, & let me entreat you as opportunitys offer, to write a line to her, she loves you & your lovely daughters; so do I. Apropos if a private good opportunity offers in a gentleman going to London let Willy & Maria send each an old shoe, you I hope will do the same. The girls will tell you why. Janet I suppose will without asking. Now my dear Nancy as I recollect nothing material to communicate & am very much pinch'd in time I am only to say what I have said before that I love you & yours & that I shall ever remain

Your truely affectionate
Brother & Friend
THOMAS WILLIAM MOORE

[*Addressed to* Mrs. A. Ridgely
Dover
State of Delaware]

Although he could not leave his post and come to Dover for the wedding, her father approved the match and the young people were married in May 1796. Their aunt welcomed them to Eden Hill Farm, where they lived until the house they had taken in Dover was ready for them. In September, 1798, they made a journey to Janet's mother, taking with them their first born child, William.

Mrs. Moore sent a letter by Janet to her sister-in-law, Ann Ridgely, when the Jones family returned to Dover. Quaintly, but in the usage of the day, the mother speaks of her daughter as "Mrs. Jones."

Brooklyn September 10, 1798

My dear Sister

As Mrs. Jones sets off this evening on her return home, I cannot think of letting so favorable an opportunity pass, without enquiring after the health of you & your family & acknowledging your favor of the 30th of June. I should have done it sooner had anything material occurred.

Your Brother when I last heard from him (which is a long time now) was unprovided for, but I flatter myself before this some provision has been made for him indeed I think it is high time.

I am very much pleased with Mr. J; he appears to be very kind and affectionate to Jane & the child. I am very happy to hear they are so well settl'd for by her account their income is at least £500 per Annum, this if

managed by prudence & econemy, they may live very comfortably, & his scheme of going in the navy is I think a *wild* one, she appears to be very much averse to it, so perhaps he may abandon it. I am grieved to hear that the Yellow Fever has reached your State, I believe not five cities in the United States have this summer escaped that dreadful disorder, the weather is now growing cool which I hope will soon put a stop to the disease.

Please to tender my love & affection to all your children, tell Mary & Willy I shall write to them very soon they must not impute my long silence to neglect, but merely for the want of something interesting to communicate, Mrs. Sand & family join me in love to you & yours

I will remain affectionately yours,
ANN MOORE

[*To* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover, Delaware
Favored by Mrs. Jones]

On their return to Dover, Janet and Jacob with their little boy were very happy but no serene and quiet life could still the craving for adventure in Jacob's mind. He continued to long for the sea. By the spring of 1799 his mind was made up.

Ann Ridgely learned definitely of his decision in May and wrote to her daughter Ann, then in Philadelphia pursuing her studies under Mrs. Cadwalader's guidance, while living at Mrs. Rowan's in Harmony Court near Carpenters' Hall.

7th. May 1799

[*From* Ann Ridgely
Eden Hill Farm
Dover, Delaware]

Mr. Jones has this minute informed me that he intends going to Philadelphia tomorrow, and I cannot omit writing a line or two by him, if it were for no other purpose but that of directing him where you Lodge, as I should be very sorry you should not see him while he is in the City. Probably he will, before long, take his station on board one of our Vessels of War. He, I believe, is now going up for the purpose of equiping himself with the proper uniform etc. etc. I pity Jane from my very soul. She is cer-

tainly an excellent wife, and I am sure loves him most tenderly. The separation must be very distressing on both sides I know, but I know not who will feel most of it. Her present situation will undoubtedly add greatly to what either would have felt had the case been different. William is a fine little creature and begins to talk very cleverly. They were here on Sunday and this afternoon I shall go there. It will be the first time I have been off my own Farm since you left me or for a long time before. I wish you would beg Mrs. Cadwalader to be so good as to have some enquiry made into the fate of my Lottery Tickets. You have the Numbers I believe, but lest you have mislaid them I will put them down. A Ticket in the Canal Lottery No. 12669 and four Tickets in the Washington "ditto" which Mrs. Cadwalader has in her hands, No. 9233, 9234, 9235 & 9236. Let me know by Mr. Jones return if you can, what they have drawn. If I do not hear from you this evening I shall be very uneasy. I hope you will this evening receive my letter of Sunday last. Heaven bless you my Dear Child!

Your ever affectionate Mother
A. Ridgely

Mary Bassett had on one of the fashionable straw hats here yesterday. I do not think it became her. Nancy Bayard's Beaver was much handsomer, but I am old fashioned. . . .

To Miss A. Ridgely at Mrs. Rowan's
No. 29 Harmony Court
Philadelphia
Favor to Mr. Jones.
Harmony Court between Wallnut and Chestnut Streets and between 3rd. & 4th. Streets very near the back of the New Bank.

Ann continued to be solicitous for Jane, left without her husband, in Dover. She sent her house boy in, with the following message and invitation:

I have sent Jo, my Dear Jane, to make you a good fire and to bring wood up into your passage for you in the course of the day. Let him also bring in as much water as may be necessary for the day. And now I am going to make a proposal to you which I hope may be agreeable which is that you

come and reside with me 'till March next but not to give up your house or remove your furniture, bring you cloaths and your bedcloaths only, but leave every other part of your goods carefully lock'd up in the house so that whenever Mr. Jones returns he may find a comfortable home where you can meet him, and for this winter Nancy Ridgely will be your bedfellow in my good warm chamber for I cannot spare you a room to yourself. Pray let me know how you like this offer; if you accept it, I should be glad if poor little Cynthia could be safely return'd to her former residence, but that can be done a few days hence in the mean time she can be here.

Yours affectionately
A. Ridgely

21st. Nov.' 1800
[*Addressed to* Janet Jones]

We believe "Cynthia" to have been a little maid employed by Janet. We do not know whether this invitation was accepted. The next letter we have from Jane was eighteen months after, when she wrote her aunt from Brooklyn. She was then with her mother and other relatives, and occasionally her husband on shore leave could visit her.

The birth of their first-born, William, was followed by that of three more children, but William, their great joy, died while an infant. His mother never ceased to grieve for him.

Brooklyn, April 24th. 1802

Many circumstances have occur'd my dear Aunt to prevent my writing ere this to you. I fear you thought me remiss, but I hope not ungrateful, as a Mother I have for several years loved you, for you have been a mother to me & mine & as such my heart will ever acknowledge; to see you would afford me a real happiness. I feel as if I had been separated from you an age already, & when my husband returns we must endeavour to visit you. I want you to see my cherub, for she is really allowed to be the beauty of Brooklyn; she has one tooth & several more coming, her grandmama appears very fond of her, she cries after her but will not fear her. Indeed she never will I believe, for her present disposition appears to delight in opposition, & she runs into every danger. Yesterday I had only gone a few paces from her, when she got up by a small bench, & pitched head over heels, &

tho' much hurt tried this morning to do the same thing, she is notwithstanding she will not mind, a very good & quick child. . . .

I have been expecting a letter from Willy for some time past. I hope illness has not prevented her writing. I am now with Mama but think the room I occupy will be too warm in the summer for my babe, & like wise that I may live cheaper by taking a couple of rooms. My friends are so kind & attentive to me, that I believe I shall fix myself in Brooklyn, & not go to Rhode Island as I at first intended. I visit Sister almost every morning, she is so fond of W. that the childe is jealous when she has John in her arms. He is a beautiful boy. Mrs. Malcom sent Will yesterday a beautiful little chip bonnet, & a doll but the poor dolls face was soon demolished, & she will not suffer it out of her arms, but is as much delighted as if it had life. O how I wish you could see her, for I am sure you would love her & join her mother in saying she is really a lovely little girl. May kind Heaven bless & protect her & grant that she may be a comfort to her Father & myself, & compensate if possible for the loss of our darling & belov'd William. . . . Now my dear & beloved Aunt adieu. Give my love to the girls, & to Harry remember me to Mr. Ridgely Mrs. Will & all friends & believe

me ever to remain,

Your Affectionate Niece J.. F.. Jones

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
Dover
Delaware State]

There followed some pleasant months at Brooklyn where Janet was with her family and children. Jacob occasionally visited her. He cruised first under Commodore Barry on the frigate *United States* when she carried Chief Justice Ellsworth and General Davie, Envoys Extraordinary, to the French Republic. Then he was assigned to the *Ganges,* the ship on which George Ridgely made his first voyage, but at times he was on shore with his wife. In 1803 came a far more serious assignment but it was not until early spring, 1804, that Janet began to worry. She wrote the following to her cousin in Dover after New Year 1804.

To Williamina Ridgely:

. . . I wish you were here to partake of the amusements of Brooklyn. Nothing but frolicking going on, assemblies & private parties. Williamina gave her little party the 24th. of December & behaved remarkably well to her company. She is quite a chatter box & speaks very plain, tho cannot pronounce a whole sentence at least a long one; but knows & calls every body & every thing by its own name. She calls herself Mina. I must own I do not think her so handsome as she is called by every body, but I think her a lovely babe. She resembles at times my beloved & darling William, she possesses his pensive look, & to me is far dearer on that account; but I never shall feel that idolizing fondness for her that I did for him.

We are just returned from spending the day at Mama's, & Williamina is gone to sleep with her grandmamas new year's gift in her hand; a Guinea, which she will not part with. She has many handsome presents among the rest a very elegant embroidered white sattin thread case, a beautiful West India work basket, a lamb, a ring, handsome shells, & many other &c they are all hoarded up. Mama gave me a set of dessert spoons very handsome, but my presents cannot interest you.

. . . Williamina sends a kiss to you all. You'd be pleased to see her dance, she holds out her frock, sings & dances. She is always anxious for me to join her, & cries to me "tome Mama 'tome Jane." She says, "papa is gone dear papa tome." She is an interesting little pup, but I cannot wean her, indeed she is so spoiled that she will not suffer me one moment from her sight. But she is neither cross nor fretful. Sister is often lamenting she is so much more forward than John. Indeed I think I never saw a child at her age so knowing but I fear ere her beloved father's return she will be quite ruined for everybody spoils & indulges her particularly Sister & her family, & Mama's partiality & affection for her pleases & astonishes me; but good night remember me affectionately to Aunt, & tell her when I find anything worth communicating I shall write to her. . . .

Yours as ever
JANET F. JONES

[*Addressed to* Miss Williamina Ridgely
Dover, Dela.
from Mrs. Jacob Jones, Brooklyn, N. Y.] Jan. 4, [c. 1804]

As the Tripolitan pirates were harassing the merchantmen of the United States and demanding enormous ransoms of our government, the merchants of Philadelphia built a frigate, named her for their city, and presented her to the navy. Commodore Bainbridge was put in command in 1803 and Jacob, now a lieutenant, sailed with him.

After minor engagements, Bainbridge proceeded to blockade the harbor of Tripoli. Adverse winds drove him off his course and the *Philadelphia* went aground on an uncharted reef near the coast. When it became apparent that the position was hopeless, the magazine was drowned, the arms and every article of value thrown overboard, the ship scuttled, the pumps choked, and the colors hauled down. Gun boats from Tripoli manned by a savage crew came out to attack her. The boatmen tore the clothing from the officers and robbed them of all their valuables. At last they carried them ashore and they were brought before the Pasha at his castle, and placed under the care of Sidi Muhamid Dghies. He promised them humane treatment and they were conducted to the house of the late American Consul. The Danish Consul, Mr. Nissen, was introduced to Commodore Bainbridge as Dghies' particular friend, and during months of tedious confinements this gentleman showed the officers every consideration and courtesy. This sort of treatment was frequently interrupted by periods of harsh confinement and they were ever at the mercy of a wilful, hot-tempered ruler, though on the whole, the Pasha's treatment was less vigorous than they had feared.

"The Danish Consul endeavoured to explain to the Pacha the nature of a parole among Europeans; and assured him that should he put the officers on their honour, they would make no attempt to escape, and he should be more sure of them than by placing them under bolts and bars. This the Pacha could not believe. He could not comprehend that any prisoner who had the chance to escape, would be deterred from doing so merely because he had passed his word. . . .

"While thus confined, without exercise or change of scene, their time, it may be easily imagined, passed heavily. But their youth and the hardy frame of mind, created by their profession, were qualified to resist for a long time, the depressing effects of misfortune. After the short interval of unavailing regret had passed, they collected their spirits and resources,

and endeavoured to derive amusement and occupation from every quarter.

"When they were taken, they lost all their clothes. The officers of the *Vixen*, as soon as they heard of this circumstance, sent a part of their clothes, which came very seasonably. Soon after, some of their own clothing was brought to the prison, for sale, and each officer, having thus an opportunity of purchasing some of his former wardrobe, they had a sufficient supply. Some of their books were also taken to them and these they purchased from the Tripolitans, to whom they were entirely useless, at a price generally much below their value.

"These furnished the means of constant employment, as the officers were enabled to pursue their studies. The prison became a sort of academy, in which navigation, the French language, and other instructive studies were pursued. Occasionally, too, they found some relief against ennui in theatrical performances. Among the books was one odd volume of plays containing the Castle Spectre, the Heir at Law, the Stranger, the Secrets Worth Knowing. These were successively got up and performed. This resource was husbanded very carefully. Thus they were busily occupied, for some time, preparing the scenery, then the dresses, then rehearsing, and finally, after great exertion for three or four weeks, the theatre was opened. The scenery was painted in such colours as could be procured; the gayer dresses of the ladies were formed of sheets, while black silk handkerchiefs sewed together furnished suits of woe and leaves and paper completed the materials of the female toilet. After this, criticisms upon the performance and dresses of the several actors and actresses, kept them alive, and sometimes cheerful for a fortnight; and then again they began to prepare for another play.

"Another great resource was, that sometimes they received letters from their friends in America. This indeed was rare; but it always had a most heartening and permanent effect upon them. Their greatest comfort, however, certainly was, that they were all kept together. Had they been separated, and deprived of the support of each others society, they could not have survived so long a captivity.

"Among their comforts too, the active and friendly humanity of Mr. Nissen, the Danish Consul must not be forgotten—a gentleman whose generous, manly and honourable conduct should be connected with every mention of the Tripolitan war. While the other agents of foreign countries, the French, English, and Spanish Consuls, kept aloof, from con-

siderations of timidity, or commercial jealousy, or wrote to the captives a cold and formal, complimentary and unmeaning offer of service, Mr. Nissen came forward at once, and from the first to the last hour of their captivity, was a constant, unremitting, anxious and affectionate friend. Money, clothes, books, everything which could contribute to render the situation of the captives less irksome, was lavished by the friendly zeal of Mr. Nissen. When the period of their captivity was about expiring, they addressed him a letter of thanks for his disinterested friendship: and as soon as they were released, presented to him an urn, as a lasting monument of his benevolence and their gratitude.

"At last Captain Lear appeared off the harbor to negotiate a peace and on June 3, 1805, the officers were liberated after a period of nineteen months captivity. Bainbridge was received as a conquering hero on his return, rather than as an unfortunate officer, and vanquished prisoner. . . ."

Meanwhile the Jones family remained in Brooklyn. It was some time after the New Year, 1804, that Janet learned of the disaster to the Tripolitan expedition and of her husband's captivity. Only once or twice during the next year was any word forthcoming. She was weakened by anxiety. A dispatch came in October but no promise of release, no hope for a reunion. Her health gave way and she became a victim of what was then called consumption. To try to regain her strength she left little Williamina and her baby boy with friends, and went into the country for her health. Her matter-of-fact half-sister wrote of her last illness, at Williamina Ridgely's request; last illness, for the journey to the country had taxed her failing strength too greatly. One evening, perhaps desperately trying to relieve the loneliness, she walked a little way in the garden, alone. Then she lay down on her bed and, quite alone, she died.

Brooklyn June 10 [1805]

From A. Sands—half-sister to Janet Moore—to Williamina Ridgely:

My dear Miss Ridgely

I received your letter and am a little mortified that you have been obliged to write to me for the particulars of my poor afflicted Sister's death. I in-

tended to have written to you immediately but a vessell going to Nova Scotia I had many letters to write that could not be omitted. I hope this apology will suffice for this seeming neglect. I will now begin and be as particular as I can in relating the circumstances of her illness and death wich to me was very unexpected. The first of the winter she was subject to hoarseness. I would frequently say Sister I do not like that hoarseness if you are not carefull it will end in a consumption. This continued for sometime then a violent pain in the side and the loss of strength with I suppose a little fever. At this time she nursed her little boy. I prevailed upon her to have him weaned. I flattered myself a great deal from this but saw no great change. She had a bad cough, some times chill & fever but not so as to confine her from her domestic employment. Finding no visibil change I sometimes for the moment would feel alarmed at her situation. I proposed a change of scene to her a visit to town at a friend of her Mrs. Rumseys. This she at first rejected in the warmest manner; then proposed the country. This was disagreeable, when suddenly she took in her head to go to town; sent for me one morning told me she was determined to go. I then told her I thought she was too weak. She seemed quite angry & asked me if she was to sit here and die . . . my reply to her was it was appointed for us all to die, we could not say which would be called first, that we ought each to pray for grace to be resigned to God's will & to be prepared for his call. Oh, she said, my dear sister, if I could take a babe in each arm I would willingly go. I told her that Christ would not accept of us on those terms, we must give all and follow him. After that she seemed more composed, had a good night. The next day I got lodgings in the country. She was delighted with the thought of going, the weather proved unfavourable for a week. That detained her in the mean time she wished to see Doctor Miller who came with the other physician who had attended during her illness. They both told us nothing but a change of air was necessary. Her lungs was not affected, and we both depended much upon what they said. She prepared everything with the greatest care for her removal. I went to see her at ten o'clock as I usualy did before I went to bed. I found her engag'd with packing up her different little articles. The next day we set out. She said now we will take a long ride and bore it without appearing to be fatigued & the next day seemed quite revived and she did not mean to return 'till she got her fill of Strawberries. The day

after I went up I thought she was altered but I attributed it to my not seeing her the day before and flattered myself it was owing to her haveing less fever till I took hold of her hand and faound it very warm. There was on the mantle piece a little book that I recommended to her for her amusement to read she said I do, but do not you take it away as My dear cousin W. Ridgely used to serve me and was quite in good spirits and took me to the window to shew me her cloathes. She went about the room as I had not seen her do for some time. The next day (unfortunately for me) I was prevented going up, my mother sent her servant up; she brought me a memorandum from her. She had walked down to the gate that day, receiving those pleasing accounts I went to bed quite easy little expecting to be called up so suddenly upon so solem occasion. The woman went to her bed with her milk. She did not speak to her. She had not moved her hand from the time she laid down and in this situation entered in eternity; the dear children are well. The boy lives the next door to me with a woman who has lived in my family and weaned him; he is not very hearty. The girl at present is with an acquaintance in the neighbourhood where her mother left her when she went in the country & I believe will continue till we hear from her Father. The last account we had from him was some time last fall, I think October. He was then comfortable but no prospect of a release. I have enclosed a small lock of the hair. Miss has got some that is longer but she is in town. My mother joins me in love to you all from your affectionate Friend

A. Sands

A very short time after her pitiful death, her husband was released from his long captivity in Tripoli and returned, still a young man, to find only his young children to welcome him.

Becky Bond wrote to her Cousin Williamina Ridgely in Dover, September 18th, 1805:

Philadelphia.
September 18, 1805

I have this morning heard that the prisoners from Tripoli have arrived from Norfolk. It is mentioned in the newspapers. Jones' name is among

them. It is a happy circumstance for his children that he is safe and well.

Jacob removed his children from Brooklyn, but we have no record of where they went to live nor of who took care of them. There is a record of them later on, when Williamina had become a nun and Jacob's only grandchild a priest.

Jacob returned to sea and was made captain. After war was declared with Great Britain he was put in command of the *Wasp*. He met the British *Frolic* and boarded her in a dramatic engagement that brought him renown.

The narrative is taken up by Thomas Wilson, who wrote a sketch of Captain Jacob Jones and one of Commander Bainbridge, published shortly after the end of the War of 1812.

"As this engagement (that of Wasp and the Frolic) has been one of the most decidedly honourable to the American flag, from the superior force of the enemy; and as the British writers in endeavouring to account for our success, and to undervalue our victories, have studiously passed this battle over in silence, and seemed anxious to elbow it into oblivion, this occasion is taken to republish a full and particular account of it, which we have every reason to believe is scrupulously correct:—

"At thirty-two minutes past eleven, October 13, 1812, the 'Wasp' came down to windward of the 'Frolic' on her larboard side, within about sixty yards, and hailed. The enemy hauled down the Spanish colours, hoisted the British ensign, and opened a fire of cannon and musketry. This the 'Wasp' instantly returned; and coming nearer to the enemy, the action became close, and without intermission. . . .

"The colours were still flying, as, probably, none of the seamen of the Frolic would dare to go into the rigging, for fear of the musketry of the Wasp. Lieutenant Biddle, therefore, jumped into the rigging himself, and hauled down the British ensign: possession was taken of the Frolic in forty-three minutes after the first fire. She was in a shocking condition; the deck, particularly, was crowded with dead, and wounded, and dying; there being but a small proportion of the Frolic's crew who had escaped. Captain Jones instantly sent on board

his Surgeon's mate; and all the blankets of the Frolic were brought from her slop-room for the comfort of the wounded. To increase the confusion, both the Frolic's masts soon fell, covering the dead and everything on deck, and she lay a complete wreck.

"It now appeared that the Frolic mounted sixteen thirty-two pound carronades, four twelve pounders on the main-deck, and two twelve-pound carronades. She was, therefore, superior to the Wasp, by exactly four twelve-pounders. The number of men on board, as stated by the officers of the Frolic, was one hundred and ten—the number of seamen on board the Wasp was one hundred and two; but it could not be ascertained, whether in this one hundred and ten, were included the marines, and officers; for the Wasp had besides her one hundred and two men, officers and marines, making the whole crew about one hundred and thirty-five. What is however decisive, as to their comparative force, is, that the officers of the Frolic acknowledged that they had as many men as they knew what to do with, and in fact the Wasp could have spared fifteen men. There was, therefore, on the most favourable view, at least an equality of men, and an inequality of four guns. The disparity of loss was much greater. The exact number of killed and wounded on board the Frolic could not be precisely determined; but from the observations of our officers, and the declarations of those of the Frolic, the number could not be less than about thirty killed, including two officers, and of the wounded between forty and fifty, the Captain and second Lieutenant being of the number. The Wasp had five men killed and five slightly wounded.

"All hands were now employed in clearing the deck, burying the dead, and taking care of the wounded, when Captain Jones sent orders to Lieutenant Biddle to proceed to Charleston, or any Southern port in the United States; and as there was a suspicious sail to windward, the Wasp would continue her cruise. The ships then parted. The suspicious sail was now coming down very fast. At first it was supposed that she was one of the convoy, who had all fled during the engagement, and who now came for the purpose of attacking the prize. The guns of the Frolic were therefore loaded, and the ship cleared for action; but the enemy, as she advanced, proved to be a seventy-four, the Poictiers, Captain Berresford. She fired a shot over the Frolic; passed

her; overtook the Wasp, the disabled state of whose rigging prevented her from escaping; and then returned to the Frolic, who could of course make no resistance. The Wasp and Frolic were carried into Bermuda.

"On the return of Captain Jones to the United States, he was everywhere received with the utmost demonstrations of gratitude and admiration. Brilliant entertainments were given him in the cities through which he passed. The Legislature of his native state appointed a committee to wait on him with their thanks, and to express the 'pride and pleasure' they felt in recognizing him as a native of their state: in the same resolution they voted him an elegant piece of plate, with appropriate engravings. The Congress of the United States, on motion of Mr. J. A. Bayard, of Delaware, appropriated 25,000 dollars as a compensation to Captain Jones and his crew, for the loss they sustained by the recapture of the Frolic. They also ordered a gold medal to be presented to the Captain, and a silver one to each of his officers.

"Various other marks of honour were paid by the Legislatures and citizens of different states; but the most substantial testimony of approbation which he received, was the appointment to the command of the frigate Macedonian captured from the British.

"The war having been concluded by the treaty of Ghent, a short respite from the thunder of cannon only was left him; for in the summer of 1815, in this ship he sailed under Commodore Bainbridge, in the squadron that followed Decatur's to the Mediterranean, to curb the insolence of the Dey of Algiers.

"When the squadron arrived in that sea, its officers were mortified to find themselves deprived of their expected honours, by the treaty previously effected by Decatur with that power, and the pacific demeanour of the others before its arrival. Taking the circuit of that sea, the squadron, finding affairs in a favourable state, returned to the United States, at Newport, Rhode Island, on the 15th of November, 1815, where it may be left until the wrongs of their country call them to more splendid actions than those springing from the torpor of peace.

"Captain Jones is about the middle size, of an active mind and vigorous make, and an excellent constitution, capable of the utmost vigilance and fatigue. Naturally and habitually temperate himself, he is a

great promoter of temperance among his crew; and has been successful in reclaiming many a valuable seaman from the pernicious habits of intoxication."

The Biography of . . . American Military and Naval Heroes . . .
Thomas Wilson of Philadelphia
Published by John Low, New York,
Second Edition, 1821

Jacob Jones died in Philadelphia on August 3rd, 1850, and was temporarily interred there. Sixteen years after the death of Janet he had married Ruth Lusby of Cecilton, Maryland. With the consent of his widow and because of his own request, he was buried in Delaware in October, 1850. In Brandywine Cemetery in Wilmington he found his final resting place. His funeral had a full military escort and was attended by many Delawareans who had known him, including John M. Clayton and Commander Samuel F. duPont. The Society of the Cincinnati had made him an honorary member.

The memorials of Jacob Jones in Dover are the facsimile of the medal that Congress ordered struck in honor of the victory of the *Wasp* over the *Frolic,* now in the Hall of Records, and the fine portrait of him painted by Sully, by order of the State, now hanging in the Governor's Parlor in the Legislative Hall.

A more intimate relic, and one used day after day, is the old dining table in the Ridgely house on the Green. At this table Janet and Jacob had many and many a tête à tête supper by candlelight in their happy months in the 1790's. Its depth of lustre is so great, after a century and a half of waxing, that candlelight seems to be reflected in deep pools of old wine.

The Romance of Mary Vining & General Anthony Wayne

PHOEBE Wynkoop and John Vining, stepson of Nicholas Ridgely, were married in 1755. This was John's second marriage. A decade before he had married Rachel, a daughter of Judge Nicholas Ridgely by his marriage to Sarah Worthington. Rachel died young, leaving a son, Benjamin.

Mary was the second child of her parents; the first was John Middleton Vining, member of the First Continental Congress. It is said that her father, Chief Justice Vining, brought his family to live on the Dover Green and that Mary and her brother spent their childhood there. When she was fourteen she went with her parents to visit her grandfather Middleton at Barriton Fields, near Salem, New Jersey. While on this visit her father died. Perhaps the only page of Mary's writing that has survived, is the following letter written from Salem to her Cousin Betsie in Dover, shortly after her father's death. It is the letter of a child but of a thoughtful, mature child.

[*To* Miss Betsie Fisher]

Dover, 1770

Dear Cousin:

Great as my distress, I have not forgot your goodness and therefore take up my pen, to convince you, that nothing in life, no change, no misfortune that can or will befal me, shall ever make any alteration in the affection and esteem which I owe you. But, my dear cousin, how vain is it to place our affection upon anything in this world. One moment, perhaps, happy in the best of parents; the next, a poor destitute orphan. Orphan! let me recall that word, I have yet one of the best of parents, one who is deserving of all my love and duty. Mama has been very ill, but now thank God, she is recovering fast, but not, anything like well enough to undertake such a journey, but as soon as a favourable opportunity offers, you will have me, to sympathise with you, in the tenderest manner. My kind love to my dear brothers, and tell them I have now more need of their protection than ever. In my brother Benny I hope to find a father, brother, all in one, if I behave myself in such a manner as to be deserving of his love. In Uncle Wynkoop's letter to my Uncle Ridgely, I have sent the key of the desk and trunks,

among them there is the key to Mrs. Nixon's trunk, and in that you will find a canister of very good green tea which you will please to use while Mr. Chew is down. Mama, Uncle Fisher and Ann Wynkoop and Mrs. Sims' family join me in love to you. And I must conclude with the sincerest prayer to yon Heaven, for your happiness—if there is such a thing on earth. These are the prayers, whether answered or not, of your affectionate cousin.

MOLLY VINING.

P.S.—Remember me kindly to my dear uncle and family.

Of her schooling we know nothing. From time to time competent teachers came to Dover, but it is possible that the Vinings, who were wealthy people for that day, employed tutors for their children. Tradition says that she was carefully educated and that she spoke French and English well and with a most excellent accent. That one of her gifts was a speaking voice "as sweet as music" is also a part of the tradition. After Judge Vining's death, the family for a time continued to live in Dover and her brother became, in the course of a few years, a member of the Kent bar. A brilliant lawyer, an orator but not a studious advocate, he frequently came into court without having prepared his cases. On one occasion he was defending an elderly colored man who was pleading for an extension of time to pay his debts. When the court asked John Vining, "On what do you base your plea," he arose and answered, "On hard times and the Hessian fly, your Honor."

After the father's death, his property was placed in John Middleton Vining's care. It was a large estate for the day but John's judgment was not of use in caring for it. To point John's carefree habit, a story told in Kent is pertinent. John Fisher lived near the Court House across the Green from John Vining. He was in court one morning in the spring term. John arose at the end of the session and with cordiality invited the Bench and visiting lawyers to dine with him next day on spring lamb, fresh peas, and strawberries. John Fisher sat there, amazed. He went, after court adjourned, across to his home and said to his wife, "Cousin John has invited the Bench and some of the Bar

to dine with him on spring lamb, fresh garden peas, and strawberries. I venture to state he has not a quarter of lamb in his smoke-house, a pea in his garden, nor a strawberry ripe on his plants." The words were scarcely out of his mouth when John Vining, handsome and beguiling, came in. After paying his cousin a compliment or two, he said, "I wonder if you and John would lend me a quarter of lamb, a bushel or two of peas and a gallon of strawberries. I am in a difficulty. I have invited the Bench to dine with me and I have nothing to give them!" Betsie Fisher had a famous garden running southwest from the Green behind her house. She was generous. John Fisher's smoke-house was well filled. John Vining entertained the Bench as he had planned, and the guests were well content with the entertainment.

Meanwhile Mary was growing into young womanhood. Her beauty is traditional; tradition, supported by so many prominent persons of her day, cannot be a myth. Lafayette, Jefferson, John Dickinson, Chancellor Ridgely, Caesar Rodney, and his nephew, Caesar A. Rodney, are among those who were unstinting in their praise of her wit, her brilliant conversation, her graceful figure, and the spirited beauty of her face. Major André sketched her at the time of the Meschienza; Nicholas Ridgely said her voice was like sweet music; Lafayette declared her Versailles-accented French was perfect. It is said that, after hearing a group lately returned from America praising the lovely Mary Vining, Marie Antoinette commissioned our Minister to say that she would be glad to receive Mademoiselle Vining at the French Court.

Caesar Rodney had loved Mary's aunt. His suit was rejected, for the lady preferred the young missionary lately sent from England to the church at Dover. There is a record here—his love letter to the Mary Vining of that generation.

. . . ver may ye 27th 1764 or 1761.

"Yesterday evening (by Mr. Chew's Tom) I had the unwelcome & unexpected news of your determining to go to Philadelphia, with Mr. and Mrs. Chew—If you Remember, as we were riding to Noxontown fair, you talked of taking this journey & mentioned my going with you: you

know how readily I . . . & how willing in this, as in every thing else, I was to oblige & serve you— When I was last down, you seemed to have given over all thoughts of going, this determined me, & accordingly, gave Mr. Chew, for answer, that he might not expect me with him; thereby I'm deprived of the greatest pleasure this World coul'd possibly afford me, The company of that lady in whom all my happiness is placed—Molly, I love you from my soul, in this believe me, I'm sincere, & honest: but when I think of the many amiable qualifications you are possessed of—all my hopes are at an end—nevertheless intended down this week, & as far as possible to have known my fate—you may expect to see me at your return, till then God bless you—

"I'm Y^rs^"

Caesar Rodney never married. He was devoted to the niece and invited her and her widowed mother to preside over his house in Wilmington. He was at that time Governor of Delaware and, while the American Army was in the Brandywine neighborhood, the French and American officers frequented the Governor's house. The Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, the Duc d'Orleans, were among the guests, while the Marquis de Lafayette was a frequent visitor. It is said that Lafayette, with Caesar Rodney's permission, stored in the Governor's house small casks of gold that he had brought from France to defray the expenses of our French allies.

Among so many gay and gallant men from the French group were some who proposed marriage to Mary Vining, but not one of them pleased her so well as a burly, rugged American soldier, Anthony Wayne.

On one occasion Lafayette held Mary's attention while Wayne, who had met her for the first time, was overlooked. Suddenly she turned to Wayne and begged some favor of him. He replied that his sword should be at her service while he lived. She said, "For such a Knight a sword should be as graceful as his wit. You need, my General, a suaver sword." Wayne returned to Philadelphia with a delightful memory of a graceful girl. Some weeks afterward a Captain Brown came to his headquarters and asked to see him. He carried a parcel "from a lady," he said, "withheld so long because of the silversmith's need of time to

complete it." When the General opened the parcel he found an elegant sword. Then he realized that the black-eyed Mary had really been impressed with him, though the French Marquis had demanded her attention. Wayne's vanity was soothed. He wanted in some way to show his appreciation, but at this time his Commander-in-Chief needed all his service. Stony Point was to be stormed, and who but Wayne, the intrepid, could be charged with this exploit? After Stony Point, Wayne was authorized to discuss with Captain Wallace of his Majesty's forces, then in possession of New York, an exchange of prisoners.

From time immemorial conferences of two or more have proceeded better to the accompaniment of food and wine; this one was well provided with both. Wayne's hospitality was noted. Before the day ended, the Victor of Stony Point and the British Captain had added anecdote to business. They had boasted of sweethearts. Wallace praised Hester Kirtwright of New York and Wayne mentioned a lady in Wilmington to whom he owed a favor. It was arranged that Wallace should ask Miss Kirtwright to buy for Miss Vining brocades and other finery as well as gifts for Margaretta Wayne, the General's daughter. In some way, twenty-one guineas found their way to New York, and back through the lines, came the gifts for Wayne's "favorite fair."

In 1780, Mary's brother had married Anna Maria Seton of New York. Four sons were born of his marriage. Mary lived with them in Philadelphia. It was a gay winter in the nation's capital and Mary was seen constantly in the company of the General. Wayne's wife, Polly, an invalid, languished at Waynesboro, not far away. Philadelphia gossips drew their own conclusions. Then the Army moved northward to the Hudson and later to northern New Jersey. The shabby soldier was fitted out by his friend Sharpe Dulaney with a new uniform—and probably it was high time. Mary sent him word that she would have for him a "feather of taste" for his hat. Wayne returned to Philadelphia with the prestige of Stony Point and the later New Jersey campaign, well-groomed, elaborately uniformed, and with, no doubt, the feather in his cap. A feast of honor was tended him and the Continental officers by the President of Pennsylvania, and Wayne received an ovation for quelling the mutinous troops of his command. Other entertainments, only a little less elegant, followed. Week fol-

lowed week and the Republican Court forgot wars and hardships and revelled in gaiety. "Dandy Wayne" belonged to a set fond of dancing, sleighing, and dining. Dress was elaborate. Manners had changed. Quaker simplicity gave way to French elaboration. The Philadelphia *jeune filles* were becoming sophisticates. The Marquis de Chastellux is reported to have said that Philadelphia girls were as staunch as Whigs in asserting their liberties.

Wayne and Mary enjoyed the gaiety of the time and the beauty of the Schuylkill and the fine estates nearby under the fall of snow. Wayne did not dance gracefully, but he could master a pair of bays and Mary would return from sleighing with a color that no vermillion was needed to intensify. Her happiness was cut short when Wayne received word that Cornwallis was hurrying north again, with a strong command. Lafayette called for reinforcements and Wayne moved rapidly through Maryland and toward Virginia. Yorktown was not far off but there was still work to be done.

Months were to elapse before the Philadelphia pleasures were renewed. In 1782 there was need of Wayne in Georgia. The old love of adventure was still young in the heart of the middle-aged veteran. Georgia lands and slave labor promised wealth, or so he thought. He made his residence there, then mortgaged his Pennsylvania acres. But in 1783 he returned to Philadelphia ill and disillusioned. His daughter Margaretta hurried to meet him. His wife, too ill to move, could not leave Waynesboro. Hartley, John Dickinson, Robert Morris, welcomed him. Mary Vining was again his diversion. Wayne joked about "that troublesome fellow, Death," roused himself, and enjoyed society.

When the Second Congress met in 1791, Wayne represented Georgia, where he still had landed estates. Tom Hartley represented York and Lancaster, and John Page, Virginia. John Vining was chosen from Delaware. In 1792 Washington sent Wayne's name to the Senate for Commander-in-Chief. James Monroe sponsored Light Horse Harry Lee, but after some bitter opposition, Wayne's appointment was confirmed. The middle-aged soldier was in harness again for the northwest campaign. He had grown stout and gouty. From Pittsburgh he wrote back to Philadelphia that he missed his friends, and re-

peated, in a letter to Bab McLaine, that he was still loyal to his Mary. He wrote to Hartley, "I am separated from the small but fascinating society in which we used to mix." He wrote of the men serving under him, describing them as "a Legion in arms perfecting themselves in the dreadful trade of Death." In April of 1793, his wife, Polly Wayne, died at Waynesboro.

Not until 1796 did he return to Philadelphia. As he made his way to the home of President Washington, the bells of old Christ Church rang out and artillery shook the air. The man who waited on George Washington was a tired soldier—pale, ill, but still with a spark of fire in him. He repaired then to the City Tavern where he was to lodge. That too he found faded and mouldy. His son Isaac came and with him his ever loyal friend, Sharpe Dulaney. Plays were given in his honor at both city theatres, the old Art Pantheon and the New Theatre on "t'Other side of the gutter." He renewed old friendships and saw Mary frequently.

No engagement was announced, yet rumors were abroad of an engagement and a proof of their intended marriage, not positive proof but contributive, is the fact that they went shopping together. Not, as on other days, for personal adornment—"a feather of taste" or a brocade of becoming color—but for household plenishings. A little of it has survived, and in a corner of an old room in Dover is a closet with a shell top, and behind the doors glazed with panes that distort the symmetry of the freight on its shelves, is the tea set of Chinese Lowestoft porcelain. It was left in a later generation to a Ridgely cousin, Williamina, and on a day in 1928 when the old house on the Green was celebrating its second centennial, the china bought by Anthony and Mary was presented to its occupant and owner, Henry Ridgely, by Williamina's heir, Nicholas Johnson. Mrs. E. Paul du Pont has a small book that belonged to Mary Vining. Very little else remains of her possessions.

After the winter of 1796, Wayne went again to the wilds of Lake Erie. He was ill—more ill than he knew. What was then thought gout by his physicians, seems today to have been chronic appendicitis. At Presque Isle on Erie he became violently ill with intense abdominal pain and there, on December 15th, 1796, he died. Two days later he was buried near the block house.

Maria Uhing

LETTRES
DE DEUX
AMANTS,

Habitans d'une petite Ville au pied des Alpes;

RECUEILLIES ET PUBLIÉES

PAR J. J. ROUSSEAU.

NOUVELLE ÉDITION,
augmentée, avec Figures.

TROISIÈME PARTIE.

A AMSTERDAM,
Chez MARC-MICHEL REY.

M. DCC. LXXVII.

Communication was uncertain, often interrupted. Mary waited for his return. On New Year's eve a messenger brought the news to Philadelphia, "Anthony Wayne, Commander-in-Chief of the American Armies, is dead at Presque Isle!"

John Vining's house, at Fourth and French Streets in Wilmington, had been the scene of lavish entertaining until the day of reckoning, when creditors could no longer be put off. There followed a collapse of the Vining fortunes and with John's wealth went Mary's. In 1802 both John and his wife died. They left four boys with no one to care for them but Mary. From her mother's estate she had saved a brick cottage that stood in a garden facing Brandywine Walk and Kennet Pike. Today the vaults and counters of the Wilmington Trust Company occupy the space where Mary's cottage stood. Two old willow trees bent over the house and behind it rose a high brick wall. Mary's shrunken fortunes compelled her to open her house to boarders. A faithful and efficient maid, Jane Mauthrell, took charge of the house and Mary lived in almost complete seclusion. Once she went to hear an old friend preach; she entered the church on Jane's arm, her face concealed by the wide ruffled cap she wore always after General Wayne's death. We know that once she dined with Governor Dickinson's family who were old friends. Another time she accompanied Caesar A. Rodney in his carriage, to arrange for her nephew's going to stay with the Ogden relatives. On this occasion she was invited to stop with Rodney and his wife at their home in Philadelphia. Rodney, then an old gentleman remembered how, when he was a lad in his Uncle Caesar's home, she had come into a room where he was reading, looking so beautiful in her evening dress that he was dazzled. She had held out her hand for him to kiss but he had drawn away, too bashful to comply. He remembered she told him that "Princes had lipped it." He said, "I did think her the most beautiful thing I ever had seen."

Now her beauty was gone, but the lovely musical voice still retained its quality, and the haunting eyes their loveliness.

The body of General Wayne remained in its rude coffin at Presque Isle for twelve years. Then, at the insistence of his children, the body was brought back to be re-interred in old St. David's churchyard at Radnor. The ceremony took place in the summer of 1808. A cortege, military and civilian, a mile long attended, and hundreds of people crowded about the old church and its quiet churchyard. Mary Vining went to the funeral where her old friend and lover found his final resting place.

THE WILLOWS
Mary Vining's Cottage, Brandywine Walk and Kennet Pike, Wilmington

After Mary's death in 1821, her nephew took charge of her papers, which included memories of the Revolutionary period and the Republican Court in Philadelphia. These the lad took to his uncle's house in Ogdensburg. Not long afterward that house was destroyed by fire with every scrap of paper in it.

After the custom of the day, Mary Vining, an unmarried lady, was carried to her grave by young girls. None of them had known her. Each was given three yards of white material. This was draped over the head and face and fell over the shoulders, well below the waist.

In the course of years the very place of her grave was forgotten. Gravestones of the relatives of the Vining name in Christ Church yard in Dover fell into decay.

With all her papers burned, there is little left to tell of Mary Vining. The sketch Major André made of her at the time of the Meschienza in Philadelphia was stolen from Williamina Ridgely Johnson's home in Kent. Fortunately a photograph was made of this in the 1880's by Gutekuntz of Philadelphia, who preserved the negative. Mrs. E. Paul du Pont has the little volume spoken of, and in the Ridgely house in Dover is the Chinese tea set, bought the day when Anthony Wayne went shopping with his "favorite fair."

Letters of
The Ridgely Children

THE turn of the century brought many social changes to Dover, the little capital of Delaware. From 1777 it had become more and more a center of social and political activity for the dwellers in the Three Lower Counties on Delaware. Here lived many of the men who made Delaware's early history. At Kingston-upon-Hull, about three miles out of Dover and within sight of the Delaware Bay, lived John Dickinson. A mile away was Caesar Rodney's home, "Byfield." Each of these men drew others about him. Dickinson was widely known for his *Farmers Letters to the Inhabitants of British Colonies,* published in Philadelphia, republished in London with a foreword by Benjamin Franklin, and afterward translated into French. He was President of the Delaware State and of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Caesar Rodney was a courageous patriot and his vote for the Declaration of Independence was a decisive one.

Until 1785, when he died, Charles Ridgely was among those whose homes surrounded the old Dover Green. The Bayards and the Bassets, the Wilsons and the Rodneys, were in this group. Doctor Sykes lived where is now the State Law Library, succeeding Samuel Chew, a brother of Chief Justice Chew of Cliveden, Germantown. Judge John Fisher's home was on the southwest and Edward Miller's on the west side facing the ancient state house. Chancellor Killen lived on the northwest side of the Green. In wig and gown he went from his door across the square to the Court House, preceded by tipstaves, and was escorted back to his home in like manner when court adjourned. Just below the square was the handsome Loockerman mansion. The Hilliards built a brick mansion in 1790 a half mile up the King's Road. To the west, a mile away, was Eden Hill Farm where the Ridgely children lived after their father's death, in the old house built by their grandfather in 1749.

By 1800, many of the families of the "Square Circle" had moved to the nation's capital or to the growing city of Wilmington. The Dickinsons, Rodneys, Bayards, and Bannings—all had removed from Dover, and the Ridgely children made many visits to their old neighbours,

now in Philadelphia or Wilmington. These visits made the mailbags heavy, for the children wrote constantly to their mother, Charles Ridgely's widow, at Eden Hill. Many relatives were living in Philadelphia. The Phineas Bonds and the William Smiths were aunts and uncles. Mrs. John Cadwalader, Mr. and Mrs. Travis, the Blodgetts and Andrew Hamilton of "Woodlands," were cousins. While they were important in the lives of the Dover Ridgelys, none lent to the picture the vividness of their cousin, Williamina Cadwalader, and none showed such extreme devotion. Indeed, Mrs. Cadwalader's personality remains so compelling even through the distance of a century and a half, that it makes all the other figures pale. After she left Philadelphia to live with her married daughter in England, there is a sense of real loss.

Chancellor Nicholas Ridgely

1762–1830

The oldest child of Charles Ridgely by his first wife was Nicholas, born in 1762. As a boy he was sent to school in Dover, but there is no record of his later education until we learn that he was reading law in Cambridge with Robert Goldsborough, a distinguished member of the Maryland Bar. After his admission to the Delaware Bar, he practiced in Dover and in 1791 he was elected a delegate from Kent County in the convention which formed the Constitution of 1792. As a member of the Legislature of 1793, he was active in perfecting the re-codification of Delaware law enacted at that time. Fundamental changes were essential, as the laws until that time were crudely adapted from those in effect when the people of Delaware lived as subjects of Great Britain. In 1801 he was made Chancellor, the highest judicial appointment in the state.

His character was similar in many traits to that of his lovely mother and he inherited the legal mind of his forefathers. He was generous and benevolent and especially interested in children. He raised and educated William Boyer and adopted his brother's son, Henry. Both

Nicholas and his wife treated Henry as their own boy and made him their heir.

We also know that both were devoted to old Christ Church and when the church silver, presented, in 1766, by Esther Wynkoop, the Chancellor's aunt, was damaged by fire, his widow, Mary Brereton, had it restored.

Nicholas died in Georgetown where he was holding Court, April 1st, 1830, after only an hour's illness. From the last letter in this book we learn that the earliest family records, together with most of his private papers, were burned. A group of lawyers, headed by Robert H. Richards of the Newcastle Bar, employed Daniel Boorstin of the Harvard Law School to edit *Delaware Cases 1792-1830,* wherein many of Chancellor Ridgely's opinions are contained.

A pleasant memento of Nicholas Ridgely is the naive water color made by his friend, R. Piggot, the Rector of Christ Church, Dover. This man is said to have been an engraver of no mean ability. The portrait sketch, while primitive, has personality, and is reproduced here.

Following are a few surviving letters written by Nicholas to his wife, which reveal a delightful relationship.

New Castle, 26 August 1806
Wednesday 10 OClock at Night.

My dear Love,

I have just left the Court, eaten my Supper, and come into my Room to go to Bed; but the Moment I sat down I took your Letter from my Pocket to give it a third reading. I heartily thank you for it. It is particularly pleasing to me because it assures me of your Health, and of the Health of the Family, except your Eyes. Without Spectacles you may remove the Inflammation. Sew less, use cold Water, & spare your Eyes, and they will soon get well. I think I can hardly indulge you with Spectacles. What, Spectacles in three Months after Marriage! O my Love, if you have got so old, so soon, what will you be in three Years? I kiss you, and bid you adieu for to-night. In the Morning I will finish my Letter.

Thursday Morning—I find you have not received a Letter which I sent by last Friday's Mail. I suppose it is still in the Post-Office at Smyrna. We have had much rain here as well as with you. If the weather is too bad, or

the ground too wet, for ploughing; they must haul out Manure, and grub the back field. As soon as they finish ploughing the fallow field, the young Calves and the pied Steer & Lockwood Cow must be turned into the Stubble Field and the Oxen with the Cows in the common pasture field; but they ought not to be penned at Night; for, after working in the day they will require all the spare Time to feed.

I begin to fear that I shall not finish the Business at this place this week. We have done a good deal, but we have a great deal more to do. However, I shall use all reasonable diligence, and try to be with you as soon as possible, for, really, my Love, I have not half the pleasure at any other place that I have at home. My Heart is wrapped up in you and of course my pleasure, my delight, my happiness is with you.

You said not one word about William. Tell him to be a good Boy, and that I expect to get some Books for him. One I have purchased, & I have sent to Wilmington for others. The weather was too bad to leave this place on Sunday, & I have not been sufficiently at leisure any other time, but the books will be got for me.

Yours most affectionately
NICHOLAS RIDGELY

This letter was begun on Tuesday Night & finished Wednesday Morning.

[*To* Mrs. Mary Ridgely
Somerville
To the Care of Doctor Ridgely
Smyrna
Del.]

Sunday 23 August, 1818

My dear Love,

I do not recollect any Occasion when I was so disappointed and mortified, as I was yesterday Morning, when I learnt from Mr. Hall that Mr. Brinckle had induced you to return. The Message which I desired Mr. Brinckle to deliver you was this: that I was much better, that there was no Necessity for your coming, and that you might, or had better return in the Stage, *but I left it entirely to yourself, to come or return, as would be most agreeable to yourself*. I should have sent no Message to you, but I apprehended the Stage might meet you, at, or near Smyrna; and knowing how

much riding fatigued you, I was distressed at causing you to take a Ride, unnecessarily, through the Heat, with Distress and Anxiety. All my object was to relieve you, but still leaving you to decide. I had this Hope, that if you felt capable of performing the Journey, that you would continue on; but if You were like to be overcome by the Ride, that you would return. I thought that if I left it entirely to yourself to come or return, you would act according to your own wishes and *Sense of Propriety*, regarding your own Health, at that Time, as of the most consideration.

Mr. Hall also informed me that Mr. Brinckle told you that I intended to go on that Day (Yesterday) to New Castle. I never mentioned such a Word to Him, and so far from it had resolved that Morning, before I saw Him, not to leave the Red Lion until to-day; and I had arranged in my own Mind, the whole Scheme of your Stay, and Return Home late in this Week.

Mr. Brinckle acted kindly, and with the best Intentions I am satisfied; and I account for his Mistake by recollecting, that just before he left my Room, and while I was committing my Message to Him, He was called to the Stage. He remembered the general Subject, but forgot the Particular Condition that you should decide for yourself; but how he got the Idea that I was to go on to New Castle I can't possibly conceive.

On the Morning that I sent for you, I was full of Anxiety and Uneasiness, with a full, strong Pulse, and with considerable Fever. I then expected a serious spell, and I had the strongest Desire to see you; and I was well assured when you knew of my Condition, which might be aggravated by Report, that your Distress would be insupportable, I therefore concluded to send. About an Hour after the Message started Dr. McLane arrived, and after enquiring about the operation of the Medicine which He had given Me the Day before, and examining my Pulse, he proposed to bleed Me, to which I assented, most cheerfully, and in half an hour after he tyed up my Arm, (after the Bleeding), I felt myself relieved, and that the Disease was conquered. From that Time I have been growing better, and this Morning my Brother and Myself left the Red Lion, and arrived here about 10 oclock. I feel myself strengthened and improved since I got here.

I will now give you a History of the Cause of my Sickness, and of its Continuance at the Time I sent for you. I had arrived at Smyrna, about 6 oClock on Tuesday afternoon very well. When I went to bed, about 10, I perceived a very powerful Perfume in the Room, like a large Collection of

highly scented Washballs. I hunted but could not perceive from whence the Scent came. I heard Ann Wakeman below & called her up. She came, and informed Me that the Clothes had been laid in a Drawer among Rose Leaves. I told her I could not bear it. She said if the Windows were hoisted for a few Minutes the Scent would be soon gone. She went down and I had not Sense enough to have the Sheets etc. taken off & others put on; but I hoisted the Window and went to work fanning the Clothes, and at last shut the Windows down, & went to bed. I lay there, and tossed and tumbled till past 12 oClock, then I took the Sheets and Pillow Case off the Bed, and lay on the Bed without Sheets or Pillow Case, with an additional Counterpane which I got from another Bed. Then I was disturbed with the yelping of a Foist, which I suppose was shut up in the house. At last I got a broken, disturbed Sleep for 3 Hours or 3½ Hours. I was perhaps more fatigued when I rose than when I went to bed. At Mrs. Cooks I lay down an Hour or an hour and an half; but it did not refresh Me. By the Time I arrived at the Red Lion, I was hot, & thirsty, & soon after a Violent Fever came. I went to bed, and remained there all the Afternoon and Night. Next Morning, Wednesday, I got up thinking to go on to New Castle, but I soon found that was out of the Question. I returned to my Bed very sick. That Afternoon I sent for Dr. McLane to come the next Day, and he came accordingly, and gave me Medicine.

Harry came on Wednesday & staid with Me till we left there this Morning. No Brother could have been kinder and more attentive; and Nobody, but a beloved Wife, such as You.

Mrs. Ford, and all her Servants were very obliging. They performed to their very best, and made Me very comfortable. Indeed I lacked Nothing, but Yourself.

Dr. McLane is a very clever Fellow. He thought of every Thing, and not only brought Me Physic, but Drink and Chocolate.

Really when Mr. Hall told Me of the Decision made for your Return I was almost knocked up. Within 10 or 11 miles, and by a Sad Accident deprived of seeing you. I felt also that there was an apparent Cruelty in desiring you to return when so near Me. But my excellent, and beloved Wife, it was all a Mistake. My Pleasure would have been unspeakable had you arrived. I had no Expectation that the Stage would meet you within 10 Miles of Me, and it never most remotely entered into my Mind that you

should return if you were able to bear the Ride. I have often lamented sending any Messages by Mr. Brinckle.

Monday Morning, 24 August

I ought to have stated that Nancy Brady put the perfumed Sheets on my Bed out of Kindness & Attention, not because they were perfumed, but because they were thoroughly Dry.

I feel better this Morning. Last Night I had a fine refreshing Sleep; and this Morning I breakfasted on excellent Chocolate, and some nice delicate Perch, small indeed but very sweet.

I am very much afraid that your Ride and Uneasiness have made you sick. I beseech you my Love, to take Care of yourself. Your Health was never more important to Me. Tell Thomas to attend to the Boys, and to get the wheat out as soon as the Weather will permit, and to have the Fallow ploughed. Some of the Boys should go every Day to see my Lot of Corn, to watch it about the Hogs and to watch Dr. Morris's part of the Fence. The front Fence, as I passed it, I found wanted a Rail in one Place. The Hasp of the Gate should be nailed. I mean of the Corn Lot.

William, I presume, is very anxious to come up. It is not necessary at present. Indeed I am just now too feeble to move about or to render Him any Service; but He may be assured that I will not omit giving Notice quite in Time for his Purpose. He shall not be neglected. I shall as occasion offers make all proper Enquiries and give Attention to his Wishes.

I am now finishing this Letter in the Morning, for I expect to be engaged & tired, before Night; and therefore to make sure Work, conclude to send the Letter to the Post Office at once.

Desire William to write to me by the Return of the Mail, & give me a full Account of your Ride, & Return Home, and how you are.

Remember Me to William, and to all the Family;

I am, my beloved Mary, with the sincerest and tenderest
Affection, your devoted & Constant,
NICHOLAS RIDGELY.

Mrs. Ford, at the Red Lion was very kind and attentive, and accomodated me very well. I have here an excellent Bed, & every thing good.

New Castle Sunday Morning
2 Sept. 1821

My dear Love,

I am exceedingly uneasy in not having heard from you by either of the two last Mails. Yesterday I certainly expected a letter and my Disappointment was in Proportion to my Desire and my Expectation. I hope to be relieved on Tuesday. I fear that you are sick and are not willing to let me know. Mary could certainly write if you are too much indisposed. It would gratify me to learn exactly the state of your Health.

If it shall be possible for me to dispose of the publick business by Tuesday Evening I propose to return on Wednesday. If your health requires Me, I will at all events be with you, God willing; but unless Necessity demands it of Me, I shall think it my duty to continue here till all the Causes to be heard are properly disposed of. My Exertions the last Week seem likely to enable Me to terminate the Court on Tuesday Evening. If I do not go down you will of course hear from Me.

I propose this Forenoon to go to hear Mr. Francis Lata preacher in the Presbyterian Church. From the little Sample this old Gentleman gave me, I suspect I shall not admire him. I then thought that he was too diffuse. He followed and did not improve the Discourse of Mr. Martin. This latter gentleman was learned, concise, and pointed in his Sermon and gave Me much Satisfaction. It is probable that Mr. Lata may please Us better when he chooses his own Subject and handles it in his own Manner. He will not suffer by any Comparison, for I understand no other Clergymen will be with Him. Mr. Martin it is said is a very conspicuous Member of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. He has a little of the Scotch Irish Dialect, only enough to give his Words a little Roughness and to compel him to speak with great distinctness. He is not a Foreigner. He has acquired his pronunciation in Lancaster County among the Irish Scotch with whom and to whom he associates and preaches.

It is impossible to be in this place for a week without falling into the Modes of Conversation and thinking adopted by the People. Religion and the Church is the perpetual Theme of Discourse, and not withstanding they hear so much it is to be feared that in private they do so little and seldom pass through any strict self-examination or practice those Devotions to which the Preaching ought to direct and lead them. Every day of my

Life adds to my Conviction of the high Importance and indispensible Necessity of a most intimate knowledge of our own Faults and of secret Prayer to God for his Forgiveness. Religion must exist and dwell in the Heart. Publick Worship by Way of Example and to animate and excite Us in our private Devotions and in all our duties to God—and in all the charities of Life is highly expedient but it is a slender Reed to rest on unless We carry into our Closets and into our Hearts a firm Resolution by the Grace of God to repent of our Transgressions, humbly & fervently to implore his Pardon, and to change our Lives. O my Love, let you and Me unite in endeavoring to serve God faithfully and diligently. Let us resolve with his Blessing to devote Ourselves to his Service and to flee the Wrath to come. Let us strive to conquer every evil inclination of our Minds and to live as we would wish to Die. May God bless you with every temporal Felicity and with the Richness of his Grace, that you may serve Him with Zeal, Sincerity and Truth!

The first Bell for Meeting has just rung and I will now stop my letter until the Afternoon, or until Tomorrow.

Sunday afternoon

The Clergyman preached from the 14 Psalm, 7 Verse, "The Fool hath said in his Heart there is no God." I should not mention this Sermon had it not given Me a better opinion of the old Gentleman than I before entertained. It was a very good Discourse and would have been creditable to any Body.

A few days after I came here William Rogers came down from Philadelphia in a Dearborn with a pair of Horses & a Servant. He looked pale and dejected, and I pitied Him from my very Heart. I don't think he was noticed by any Body. He returned after sauntering about a Day and a half. He came to see Me. I had no Opportunity to give Him any Advice and indeed supposed that it would be altogether unprofitable. It is probable that he has already expended his whole Fortune. He intended on his Return to Philadelphia to start for Pittsburgh. He informed me that Bingham was to be married to a poor, but very beautiful Girl in Philadelphia of the name of Dawson, whose Family is not known among the People of Fashion. Poor William! his Race has been soon run. He now is or very shortly will

be without a cent and without the Knowledge of any Business to acquire a Subsistence. It is not possible to conjecture what his future Course will be after his Money and Credit shall be all exhausted.

My brother and Charles are well. I have not seen them Today. They probably have gone to Wilmington. Yesterday Afternoon they and all the Lawyers of New Castle went to the Pea Patch in the Steam Boat. I was obliged to employ the Time in the Court House in finishing the Business that had been before.

It is now at half after four o'clock raining very hard and from [the] Appearances of the Weather we may expect a great deal.

I have with the assistance of Miss Sallie bought you three Pieces of fine Apron Tape, all that was in New Castle. Mr. Mundale has sent to Me a small package directed to "The Honourable Mrs. Ridgely." I suppose it is made up of a Variety of his Essences and sweet things which he thinks "will be very good for the Lady."

In the Morning I may perhaps add a Postscript. In the meantime my dear, beloved Wife, sincerely and most affectionately

I am, your own

NICHOLAS RIDGELY

Monday Morning

I have nothing to add but my Prayer for your Felicity. N. R.

Tuesday Afternoon, 12 April 1825

My dear Love,

William Boyer was in New Castle Yesterday, and informed Me that he should be married this Day two Weeks; and he promised me that He would write to you by ToMorrow's Mail. Now, as this Point is settled, you will come to New Castle, at any Time that will be most convenient and agreeable to yourself. If it will suit you, I should like that you should come up *not later* than next Monday. I want you to get up in Time to be completely rested. You may come when you please, but I would advise that you should come, so that you may get entirely relieved from the Fatigue of your Journey. I don't expect that the Court will break up before next Saturday week; Then we shall possibly spend a Week, or about that Time, at New Ark, which will make my Absence from Home three Weeks, and yours two, or about that Time. William will be married on Tuesday the 26th

Day of this Month. He says there will be a very large Company of the Lady's Friends. I expect to go to New Ark with him next Saturday Afternoon, and to return to New Castle the next Day, in the Afternoon.

The Weather is becoming dry and fine for planting Corn. I wish this Work could be done as soon as the Ground is fit for it. Can you prevail on my Brother to ride over to our House every Day or two while we shall be absent.

I have made my Mind up patiently to continue in this County till after William's Wedding, tho' I regret that I shall be obliged to be so long from home. I think you may without any Impropriety explain to my Brother, in Confidence, the Reason of your coming up; and urge it as an Inducement to him frequently to call at our House.

The Seat of my black Cloth Breeches is wearing out. Can you bring up some black Cloth to repair them?

Kiss Henry for me and give him my Love.

The Presbyterians of this Town have given Mr. Danforth a Call. Some of the Men wished a farther Trial, but the Women were so urgent, and pressed their Invitation of him so incessantly that they could not delay it farther. He is a Yankee.

I just now received your Letter. Come up on Saturday. I would rather you would come then than later. You see from what I wrote before the Mail arrived, that the sooner you come, the more agreeable it will be to me.

Press Sam about the ploughing. He ought to finish it, at farthest by Tomorrow Night.

Give my Love a Thousand Times to Henry. Kiss him for me.

They are all impatient to see you tho' I told Miss Sally only, for a certainty, that you would be up. Last Night, after I saw William, I told her that I should expect you very soon; perhaps on Saturday, & not later than Monday.

I shall give your Love to the Girls, & to Mrs. Ross. Mrs. Booth was greatly disappointed that you had not come with me. I shall let it leak out that you will be here on Saturday.

I am my dear Love, yours most affectionately

NICHOLAS RIDGELY

New Castle, Sunday, 4 March 1827

My Dear Love,

Instead of going to New Ark Yesterday, I was confined in the Courthouse until Sunset, in the publick Business. I could not, with Propriety, dismiss the People, especially as some were attending from a Distance, and were anxious to be saved from farther Trouble and Expense. But as to New Ark, my Mind is almost conclusively made up to send Henry there; indeed it is quite so, unless his Father shall make Objections. In a few little Inquiries which I wished to make, I shall be satisfied this Week by Mr. Whitely, whom I saw and conversed with on Friday. I expect to see my Brother on Monday or Tuesday Evening, and after conversing with Him, I will make Arrangements, if he consents, for taking Henry there some time in May. They will have an Examination about the 18th of April, and the School will commence again early in May; so that, about the first or second Week in May, Henry may commence with the next Session, as they call it. The Account which I have had of the School does not meet with my entire Approbation; but connecting the School with the Manners & Morals of the Place, and with Mrs. Boyer's care of Henry, I prefer it to all other Places which I can hear of.

I am not satisfied with Charles's Conduct here, since last Thursday Evening. He went off, at Night, through a good deal of Rain, to a Ball, got up some how or another, at Saint George's, and did not get to this House again, until yesterday afternoon. On Thursday Night & Friday Night he was at Saint George's, and at the Green Tree, a Tavern kept at Clark's Corner, two Miles from New Castle. He came back to New Castle, Yesterday, Saturday Morning. At Noon I found him at Gould's Tavern opposite the Court House and I begged and entreated him to go home to Miss Caldwell's to Dinner, but he was much engaged with Kensey Van Dyke, and Charles Van Dyke, and could not leave them, and would not go with me. He was quite sober, and I have not seen, nor heard of his being intoxicated. He returned to Miss Caldwell's in the Afternoon and remained here until the Evening, when he went to sup at Mr. Booth's Junior, & came back some Time after I went to bed, to this House to lodge. Mr. Booth had several Gentlemen to sup on Terrapin & Oysters. I was invited, but did not choose to join in the feasting at Night. I spent the Evening, after Tea, till 9 O'Clock with Judge Booth and his kind old Lady. I shall communi-

cate to Charles' Father, when He arrives, this Saint George's adventure. I fear much for him, particularly as great Pains have been taken to save him from Evil. I see several little Circumstances, which, tho equivocal, I fear indicate that he has not yet decided absolutely to reform. He sat in Mr. Roger's office, on Thursday Night, until past 8 O'Clock, listening to Advice, and knowing that Mr. Rogers was about to write very favorably of him to his Mother. He left the office, hired a Gig and Driver, and plunged through Rain and bad Roads to St. George's, after 8 or 9 O'Clock the same Night. Charles since pretends to be very repentant, as Mr. Rogers informs me, and I suppose He is, but the Misfortune is, that the slightest Temptation may lead Him into the same Errors. But his Father shall know all.

Our Family are all at Church to hear Mr. Danforth. Susan however, and Mrs. Ross and myself are to be excepted. Susan, I suppose, is looking after Dinner, Mrs. Ross is in her Room, and I am employed much more agreeably in writing to you.

The good People of this place are going on, without the least deviation, in their usual habits of going to Church, in the Day and in the Night; visiting at Night, after Tea, having parties, and enjoying themselves in their innocent Amusements. The young Ladies have had parties three successive Nights, at Mr. Black's, Dr. Colesberry's, & at Mr. Janvier's. Charles and the Gentlemen of this House were invited to all; & to all the Terrapin Suppers given by the Gentlemen of this House. Every attention has been paid to Charles by the Gentlemen in this part of the Town who usually associate together.

Monday 5 March

I had written the above when the Family returned from Church, and then I stopped. Charles & I were invited to a Family dinner at Mr. Roger's, where we dined, & remained until near Tea Time. At Night we went to hear Mr. Conolley preach, in the Episcopal Church. This Gentleman you may have seen or heard of at Times when you have been here. He was ordained some Months ago. He preached just such a Sermon as you would expect from a new Beginner.

I am in great Hopes that I shall finish the Business on Thursday Night, & if so I shall set off on Friday; but I am afraid that I shall not accomplish

all my Wishes, for the Canal Cause is to come again before Me on Thursday; and from the apparent Preparation, it is possible that we shall not get through it in one Day.

I am anxious to get Home, very anxious indeed, for I have not heard a Word from you. I do not feel very well this Morning, neither did I last Night; but I will take the best Care I can, and will be with you as early as possible.

Your ever affectionate
NICHOLAS RIDGELY

My Love & a Kiss to Henry.

George Town, Sunday afternoon
12 August 1827

My Dearest Love,

I shall write you a Letter short and sweet, for I really have Nothing to say to you, but to express to you my oft repeated Tale of Love, and to gratify you and Myself by its Repetition. When I write to you I seem to be talking to you, and when I talk to you, no Subject can be more pleasing than to review, from the first to the present Day, those Scenes of Rapture and Delight which have sweetened our Days and Nights. To be sure, at our Time of Life, the Recollection of past Pleasure must be substituted for present Enjoyment; but still when Love fills the Heart, and the Passions are mellowed down to the tenderest Friendship, Gratitude; to a Sense of Mutual Dependence, and all the Ties by which Hearts can be united subsist in full Force, we may talk of Love or of Passion, or Enjoyment, or Sentiment which gives a Zest to every comfort or Delight of Life. I can and do love as sincerely, and with as much affection and Constancy as ever. And if Age has subdued, in any Degree the Ardour, it still has left more than the Preference and Passion of Youth. But enough of this Matter until I embrace you in my Arms.

It was too hot and dry and Dusty for me to undertake a jaunt this Morning, to Indian River, and having felt a little out of Order, and Mr. Stockley being engaged to wait on his wife somewhere today, I have declined my proposed Ride to Mr. Prettyman's. I have not heard from them since I saw Comfort last Monday Morning.

I have seen Caleb Rodney at George Town, but only to ask him how he

& his Wife, and Family were. Daniel has not been out; and Nothing new has occurred there except that Henry F. Rodney has been appointed, by the President, a kind of Inspector of the Port at Lewes; an office, or Station or Charge, said to be worth from 900 to 1000 Dollars a year. This, I have heard, has given great Disgust, and has turned most of the People there Jacksonians; indeed, it is said to have had a mighty Effect all through this County, and that the People are turning over to Jackson in great Numbers.

Batson has been appointed & confirmed as Keeper of the Lighthouses.

None of our Acquaintances have married or died that I have heard of. It has not rained since I have been here, but on Sunday last there fell a plentiful shower at Indian River; and To-day, about 11 OClock, it rained, I suppose, at the Chappel, and Maybe, at Lewes.

W. Higbee went to Jersey, more than a Week ago, to see his Wife.

I hope to be at Home on Friday. This is my present Prospect, but I will write more certainly about it, on Wednesday.

Remember me affectionately to Marianne. I shall try to add a Line or two Tomorrow before I seal this Letter.

I am, my darling beloved Love, your own
NICHOLAS RIDGELY

Monday Morning, 13, August

Last Evening I called on old Mrs. Kollock, at her Son James'. She seemed quite glad to see me. She was cheerful and in good Health; and the long Interval since Mr. Kollock's Death has added but few more Wrinkles to her Face. Mr. Stockley came over (for they live very near to each other) and invited us to his House. He then treated us to Watermelons. One was sweet and excellent, but the other, the largest and best looking, was tough, and insipid. And this is the Quality of all this sort of Fruit which I have seen. None have been in George Town for Sale. I have seen Peaches but once.

It rained towards Millsborough, Indian River, and all along towards the Sea Yesterday. Here we had a few Drops from a thin flying Cloud, but not enough to wet the surface of the Ground.

I am well this Morning, and I have not been sick; but from the exces-

sive Heat, and getting but little sleep for the first two or three Nights after I arrived here, I did not feel quite well.

If Business is not very pressing I will write on Wednesday. I now hope to be at Home on Friday, and will, if I can accomplish my Purpose; but this is not certain. Today We shall engage in a troublesome Case.

Remember me to Marianne.

My dearest Darling, I am your own
NICHOLAS RIDGELY

[*To* Mrs. Mary Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

Williamina Ridgely
1775–1808

In February, 1803, Williamina wrote from Philadelphia to her mother, and placed in her letter a list of seeds and plants which she was sending to Eden Hill Farm.

Philadelphia, Feb. 28., 1803

I have just bought for you, my dearest Mother, the roots and seed you desired. I could not get any more of the melons or cucumbers than I send without giving an extravagant price. McMahon would not let me have of two kinds of watermelon without paying highly. I therefore took a five penny bits worth of what looked the best. He said the meat was red and very fine. I got four kinds of cucumbers, one of which is white always, even after pickling them—this the seedsman and another man standing by told me; they praised them very much. He said the frame cucumbers would grow quicker for frames to run on but they did extremely well without. I got two crocus. The other kind called saffron crocus he s[ai]d w[oul]d not do to send now—it is too late—and the moss rose had not come yet. I wish very much to have the china pink and those already sent taken great care of. All the Beans and the Peas I got because they were different

from any we have and you know I am particularly fond of them. The white beans look something alike but are very different. They say, the smallest are the earliest. They are all very tender; the black beans have white blossoms and when boiled are very green. I send the Illinois nuts. The Hickory I have not got now. I beg you to let me have the pleasure of presenting you all these roots and seeds. I assure you it is only what I should have done by Jeffery if they had been here but they have come since. The short top'd radish I have sent mixed with red radish, and the salmon radish by itself. The Star of Bethlehem is a white flower blooming in a cluster like stars, very handsome. This Mrs. Smith (Judge) told me. *All* the seeds and roots I have got cost not many pence more than two dollars so you may be content to receive that trifle. If you do not, I shall be affronted. Mrs. Miller, I hope, will be the bearer of this. She was so kind as to offer, and I hear she goes tomorrow. I will send to her today this letter and the bundle. Remember to plant the smallest Illinois nut for me in the garden; let the ground be watered and oats put with it, & keep a little one to taste.

I got a letter from Ann and one from you last week. I am glad you are all well or better. I hope you have received all safe by Jeffery. Aunt sends love. She has been fretting because the girls will expect better boxes. She is afraid they will be mortified with them. I hope they are pleased with them for she is quite distressed at having sent anything so plain.

Miss Bond and Mrs. Travis saw Mrs. Miller at Quesnet's practicing on Saturday and thinks her a little beauty. Tonight I go to Chews. It will be a large party and I am very much pushed for time. Now I ought to be putting white silk under my sleeves. My hair will be dressed with a wreath of flowers—my *own* hair I shall appear in as I always do when most dressed.

I send you the bill of the roots and seeds because I fear as they are in newspaper bags you will not be able to read what they are. All the beans and peas have fine characters.

Kitty Wethered was asked to tea at Mr. Travis' yesterday but she was engaged to Mrs. Montgomery. She looked very well and is very much admired by *this* family but I perceive anything that is fair is so I stand no chance. I am no fatter than when I left but am told I look better. I am quite clear of jaundice and am thought very like Mrs. Blodget so I think I can't

be so much altered as I thought. George Harrison says nothing but "twins was ever so much alike."

Your very affectionate child, my dear Mother,
W. Ridgely in noted haste.

Pray remember my poor little running box and don't let it be dug up.

Mrs. Ridgely

Bo[ugh]t of Benj. McMahon

1	Star of Bethlehem	.25
2	Crocus	6
	Caraway	6½
¼	oz. New Zealand Lettuce	.25
¼	oz. White Cauliflower Brocoli	12½
	Early Romana and water melon	12½
1	pint white blossom & Tokes Beans	18½
1	pint Early Mazagan Beans	18½
1	pint Glory of England Peas	18½
		$1.43
4	kinds Cucumbers	.25
	China Pink	6
		$1.74

Rec'd the Contents
Benj. McMahon

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover, Delaware
Mrs. Miller]

The love of gardens persisted in the family and occasionally breaks into the letters. In 1827 Sally Ridgely wrote to her daughter Elizabeth at school in Philadelphia:

"April 18—Our gardens in town and country are especially beautiful. The former attracting much attention."

The boxwood in the gardens on the Green and at the farm was much of it large enough to be handsome in those days.

Among many plants mentioned from time to time were snowberry, crocus, star of Bethlehem, China pink, flowering grape, "kiss me at the garden gate," running boxwood, hemlock, periwinkle, cypress-vine, lady slipper, Antwerp raspberry, peach, cherry, plum, and apple trees; strawberry, melon, spinach, asparagus, carrots, beans of many varieties, peas, white cauliflower, and broccoli. Chestnut trees, catalpas, horse chestnut and walnut trees, cedars and pines also appear.

Thomas Jefferson in his letters speaks glowingly of the "silk tree." This tree has been for a long time in Kent County. Another old favorite is the paulownia, though it may not have been introduced into Delaware before 1825.

Philadelphia, March 30th, 1803.

This day week I had the pleasure of a letter from you my dear Mother and rejoice to hear you are well. The hair was very acceptable and I shall make good use of it. It is very much admired. The pictures have not yet been framed but shall be sometime before I return, which I do not wish to be in a hurry as I pass my time much more agreeably now than in the Winter and I am beginning to pick up a little.

Miss Bond's party was the most pleasant one I ever saw in this town but not so large as she expected. I was never dressed more to my mind tho' extremely plain. Most people are decked in spangles, etc., etc. Miss Bond and Mrs. Travis with a very few others were plain. My *own* hair was in loose curls all over, parted on my forehead, ears bare about half way up, with a black velvet ribbon two yards long which went three times round my head covered with white beads like pearl; a necklas of the same beads, a Vandyke which reached the collar bone with a lace frill on the top, pinned under the dress which was white mantua, quite plain before, with a broad hem on the top drawn or pretended to be, with white figured ribbon which hung down in a long string below the bow, a bunch of rose geranium in my bosom; the dress was trimmed with white silk cord that looks like little beads across the room; white kid gloves, long purple kid shoes, silver roses on them. Miss Loveland made this dress and found the trimming for [it]. All together she asked four Dollars which I gave with more cheerfulness than I should have done one to Betsy Carson and think the differ-

ence in my person was as great as that of their prices. In short I spent a most agreeable evening as did all the company from their appearance, Kitty Wethered excepted, who pretended to be pleased but I know was not. If she would be silent she might do but that vile passion to which you know she is prone discovered itself so often that she is quite out of favor. One night she went to the play with us. Miss B. asked Captain Provost to go home with her but as we came from the Theatre he said Miss Bell who sat in the same box with us was a pretty girl and Kitty expressed her surprise and raved at his taste. The consequence was he went all the way down to Sword's with her without opening his lips after he left this house. She was fool enough to tell this herself and to talk in the strangest way of beaux (which is the constant theme) that you ever heard and you have had specimens sufficient of the sense of the family.

Yesterday more letters came from Mrs. Erskine. She is well and happy, has weaned her son. She desired her love to Mary, thanks her for her letter and says she will write by the next packet to her. Your cousin, Jack Franks, has a legacy of two hundred and fifty thousand guineas left him by Mrs. Levy, a Jewess in London who was related to him. Fanny Erskine says Rowley Moore had dined with her, "he is sensible and clever tho' raw and untutored,"; his Mother is in wretched circumstances. Mr. Erskine intends she shall go to see her and try to make her rather more comfortable. The letters were dated Jan[uar]y 30th.

I hope the letter by Mrs. Wells with the bottles and books reached you safely. They had only one soft newspaper round them but I was at Mr. Travis' and the children worried me so much that I hardly knew what I was about. I have heard since I sent it that "the Beggar boy" is very clever. I hope you found it so. I have bought for you and Mary a little smelling bottle filled with sweet scent just like the one Bell Rowan gave Ann only not in a case. They were but nine pence a piece. If there had been more I would have treated Ann, M. W. Ridgely and myself to one. They are enveloped in cotton but so delicate that I fear they will be broke unless I get a little box of some kind to keep them in which I think I must do. I met at the same shop with a pair of scissors like those Mrs. H. gave you only much more elegant for which I gave a Dollar; was I too extravagant? There was no more or I should have remembered my sisters, but I see a thousand clever things that I should delight to send them if I could afford

to be generous. Mrs. Travis is more agreeable than I ever knew her. She and Mr. T. pressed me very much to stay with them but I prefer being here and going there often as a visitor. On Saturday, I supped there. The company was Mrs. and Miss Lee, Mr. and Miss Bond, Mrs. and Mr. Cad, Captain Provost, Miss Forrest, Miss Travis, Miss R. Hare and R. Rush. The latter inquired after Mary. I think of him as Mary and everybody else does: that he is very agreeable . . . . He told me I was so like a lady he once knew, and for whom he had had a regard and indeed must always esteem, that he could not keep his eyes off me the first time he saw me, he was struck with the likeness but at first did not recollect that it was Mrs. Blodget I so greatly resembled. He is as great a starer as some of our neighbors. Ann knows who the beauty is I allude to.

Mrs. Powell was to see me on Sunday and asked if I was daughter to her old and intimate friend Mrs. R. Miss Bond replied in the affirmative and said her Mother had intended I should not wait for a visit but should call on her. She begged I would and she should rejoice to see me. Miss Willing and her brother Dick have been, Mrs. D. W. Coxe with her sister Miss Byrd and more you have not heard of. I am going to a party at Mrs. Coxe's on Friday. Today I am invited to dine at Geo. Harrison's and another invitation to spend the evening with Miss Bass. I shall write to Ann soon. R. Rowan desires her love to you and her. I have much more to say but the pen is too bad. My love to the family. Aunt desires hers. I know nothing of Blodget. Becky lives between this and the Woodlands. Let little Sarah know I saw Sally a few days ago. She was well. Adieu my dearest Mother. As usual in haste,

Your affectionate
W. R.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover, Delaware]

Mrs. Erskine, referred to in the foregoing, was Fanny Cadwalader. She married David, son of Thomas Erskine, Lord Chancellor of England, and had gone to live with him there. Mr. Cadwalader was Thomas, Fanny's brother, and the only son of General Cadwalader and Williamina, "Mrs. Cad." Rowley Moore, from other allusions to him, appears to have been the son of Captain Thomas William Moore's daughter Williamina, who had married a man of the same surname.

Germantown, July 13, 1803.

I was very much distressed and surprised by a letter from you my dear Mamma last night, at finding you had not received mine which went by a friend of Mrs. Mifflin's on the 4th instant, which I expected would have reached you immediately as she promised, but I have almost a mind to declare nothing shall ever again tempt me to write by a private hand. You say you have not had a line from me since the 22 June, which is a most amazing thing. I wrote to Mary either on the 26 or 27, to you and Ann, both on the 7th instant, and to you again on the 8th which I hope arrived at your house on Monday. If it did not I can't tell what to do for it was sent to the post office in time. I have never missed one week since I left home writing to you, and am sorry you think I neglect you so much. You know it does not take me long to write and nothing would prevent my doing it regularly. If I had been, or was to be sick my friends would directly let you know it. I entreat you to be easy on my account, and be assured if anything should be the matter you will hear it at once.

Mrs. Travis desires her love, and says she was in hopes you would . . . conclude as she does that no news is good news. Now I am here it will be much harder to put letters in the post office as I cannot often meet with a way of getting them to town and perhaps you will not in future hear from me every week, but I beg and entreat of you my dear Mother to be satisfied that if I should be sick you will hear it, and do not destroy your peace by such fears. I shall never fail to write, but if the letters do not go in time it is not possible for me to help it.

Mrs. Cadwalader with little Fanny, Miss Bond and Nancy Travis are now at Rockwell, Tom Cad. in town, as is Aunt and Mr. Bond, who has the gout. Mr. Travis is at New York. I ride and walk with Mrs. Travis every day. Her house is next door to Mount Airy, a very healthy situation. Philadelphia is quite so, and I hear no complaints from any quarter. In my last I said Tom was going to the Yellow Springs but he gave it up. I believe he will take a ride but I do not know when or where. I have not seen the Jones' since you told me of the poor old woman's death, for I have been in town only one day since and I did not like to walk so far as to Batson's. I suppose I told you that Williamina Jones had a bile on the side of her neck near her left ear. She is the most patient little creature I ever saw, but will be horridly dragged up by her Mother. Apropos Jones and Jane

have both had their profiles taken. They are very like them and they appear better in that way than any other.

Mrs. Cad. has had letters from Fanny. She expects to lay in in December, is quite in high life, with all the nobility, and the Prince of Wales, who she says she frequently sees. He is very sociable with old Mrs. Erskine. I take it into my head they are very dissipated people, from the first to the last. Fanny Erskine has seen Mrs. Johnson who she thinks the image of Peggy Hamilton, very fat and I think must be very vulgar and disagreeable. She always has a large black dog tagging after her and when she dines he is behind her chair with his feet on her shoulders. She feeds him while she is eating, giving him food from her own plate, alternately taking, and giving him a mouthful of everything, even fish—they say it is very fat with sore eyes and ears—this is the description of them; I give [it] as I receive it. She says the houses in England are kept very dirty. Her own is thought very nice but her Mother would think it the reverse. She was just going to spend some weeks at Cambridge.

Young Ingersol came to Philadelphia on Wednesday last. He went to spend two years in England, but found one quite long enough.

Has Mrs. Bayard returned from Dorset, or did Mary leave her there? If Mary Basset is at Dover give my love to her. I hope as soon as she has a safe opportunity it will suit her to return N. Travis' frock and the shoes, if she does not like them. They are Miss Bond's but she wanted to part with them as she had a great many pair and got me to send them for Mary to take, if she liked them.

Heaven bless you my dearest Mother. May you keep well. My love to Mary and Harry. Do you ever see Mrs. Wilson? Mrs. Batson told me that Bradford and Mrs. Miller were certainly engaged, but probably this was like most of the news Mrs. Jones told me. I heard lately that brother Nicholas' boy Elijah was living in Philadelphia, but I have never seen him, nor do I know where he lives, if he is there, which I almost doubt.

Adieu my Dearest Mother, your truly affectionate

W. R.

This letter I shall endeavor to get taken to town by some of the neighbors tho' they are all strangers to me.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover, Delaware]

The Mrs. Wilson about whom Willy inquires was a sister of Caesar Rodney.

The Jones family are, of course, her cousin Janet, with her husband Jacob, the future Commodore, and their little daughter.

Elijah was obviously a colored servant, either freed or a runaway.

Germantown, July 17, 1803.

On Friday night I had the pleasure of getting a letter from you, my dear Mamma, two from Mary and one from Mary Bassett, who says she had not yet seen Ann but shall make a point of it as soon as she can get out. I am not a little surprised she should wait for a visit. I truly rejoice at your being better, for taking the management of the family on yourself, and am certain it would do much to your health if you were to keep to it. It will be a fortnight on Tuesday since I have been here, and I lament my absence from town during Captain Denny's being there. It was not possible to send down anything by his vessel for I never heard a breath of him 'till the letters came which as I said above was on Friday night, and since that there has been no opportunity that I knew of, or I would have written to Aunt Bond and she would have sent the cheese etc., which she is very anxious about.

I am very sorry for poor Mrs. Fisher and sincerely hope she may recover. Mary says Bradford is to settle in Dover—that is a strange thing, and certainly I should conclude not congenial to Mrs. Miller's wishes. Perhaps, Mrs. Travis and myself may go to Rockwell to dinner. If so, I shall take this in hopes they will have a way of its going to the post office.

Mr. B[ond] is better. All our other friends are well. Mr. T[ravis] is not yet come home. Make yourself perfectly easy and if you do not get letters attribute it to the right cause; namely, not having them in time for the mail, but pray I beg of you not to suppose I am sick for if that was the case you would immediately hear it from one of our friends. I will never again write by a private hand unless I also send at the same by the post. I wrote to you on Tuesday. The letter was taken to Philadelphia by a Mr. Neill who lives near here. I must try to get acquainted with the neighbours in order to trouble them in this way.

Last night, Mrs. T. and I went to see Mrs. Chancellor, who lives in

Philadelphia but comes out in the warm weather. We afterwards paid a visit to our next neighbour, a French family, named Tarescon who live at Mount Airy, which must I am sure be like the Bastile as to size and corridors, for in my life, I never saw such a clump and odd kind of house, and they are still building to it. The lady of the Castle is young, and handsome. She has an infant of a few weeks old. This time last year she lost a sister, a Mrs. Tarescon—they were married to brothers who still live together. There is another sister on a visit from Washington, who has a baby of a few months old. Her name is Simmons. She is one of the greatest beauties I ever saw and very merry. Her eyes are extremely fine, black, and very expressive, with a most delicate complexion, dark hair, fine teeth and a deep dimple in her chin. The evening before last, Mrs. Travis and I set off at five o'clock and rode about twelve miles. I never saw anything more beautiful than the prospects and a vast number of very handsome country seats. We passed the house belonging to Sally Goldsborough, and "the Holly" as it is called, which to me appears like a wilderness and next to it, is one of the most enchanting spots I ever saw lately. The property of Governor Mifflin, now belonging to an Italian. I am sorry Mary did not call on Miss Hunn. When I was at Wilmington she visited me, and asked me to spend an evening with her, and I think such visits not only very pleasing but necessary. How is my running box? Does it thrive? I hope all the seeds we sent in the spring grow and flourish. I will endeavor to get the walnuts for you. I had thought of the blank book before you mentioned it and shall attend with great pleasure to your wishes if I can meet with anything worth transcribing. I sewed when at Rockwell with Aunt for five days. I sewed up 1 dozen seams a yard and a quarter long and cut out 12 shirts for Nancy. Aunt praised me very much and seemed to think it wonderful that I could do such a thing. That did not flatter me much 'till I recollected her own daughters always rely on her to cut for them, so that in the end it was a compliment.

I shall not expose myself either to the sun or night air and tho' I hope to go to Phila[delphia] for a little while, I shall not be there when there is any danger, or when our friends leave it. Hitherto I have found it vastly cooler than the country, but I suppose that is owing to the rooms being so much larger. To me it has never been disagreeably warm but I shall seek no risk so pray my dearest Mother be quite satisfied of my taking care of myself

and my friends taking care of me. Aunt is very like you in her attention and kindness and she makes a great fuss with me. Indeed nothing was ever kinder. I shall never fail to write at least once a week, whether or not you get the letters which however I shall try to send, but I fear you will hardly be able to read them, but I know the sight of my writing will content you, as must be the case with this as I made the pen myself.

God bless you my dear Mother. Do not scold Ann about the letter tho' it really gave me great uneasiness.

Your very affectionate
W. R.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely,
Dover, Delaware]

"Aunt," throughout the letters of Willy's visit, refers to Mrs. Phineas Bond, Ann Ridgely's sister.

Rockwell, July 30th, 1803

My dear Mamma,

I wrote to you the night before I left town which was this day week, and the letter I expect reached you some days ago. Miss Bond wrote me a few days back that my Dover dispatches had not gone for which she was very sorry, and lamented her not knowing where Denny staid that the things might have been sent to him. I am particularly anxious for you to get the box, more on account of the cheese than anything else it contains, as at this season it will be very comfortable and necessary for you to have it. Henny is not yet put to bed but the family are in hourly expectation of it, and her mistress does not like to leave her with only Aunt at that time.

Mr. Bond came out this morning to remain 'till Monday. Tom had returned the night before last and his Aunt writes word he is perfectly well, if good looks and a good appetite are tokens of health. He will be here today. I should be glad to introduce little Erskine to you. I really think when she smiles her countenance is heavenly, and in my whole life I never saw a child so easily managed, or one kept so strict as she is. I had a letter from Ann dated the 22nd. She was in fine spirits and frolics away at a great rate. She was then at Mr. Wethered's, but had been at a hundred places. She was to return in a few days to Dr. McKee's where she desired me to

direct my letter, which I did, that night. I wrote her a very long one and sent it the next morning to town. She says White is extremely kind and attentive and that Dr. Tilton has been to see her several times and as usual makes a great fuss with her—you know he is her first beau. She mentions being at Bayard's and spending a most agreeable evening with several beaux and belles. She was the day she wrote to drink tea with Mary's old friend, Mrs. Freeman.

Jane went off as I before told you without my having an opportunity of letting her know of Nanny's death. She wrote me a long letter without a date but by the post mark, it must have been written on or before the 26th . . . .

I have three handsome new fashioned caps, two of which are made after some just from England, belonging to Mrs. Gard and the other by a french one. I have also some pretty night caps, very becoming; if I meet with an opportunity I shall send on a piece of the latter to the girls, and should be pleased to send Mary a smart day cap but know her aversion to *flat* heads. Give my love to all the family, to Miss Warner and Miss Clayton. I hope to hear you are all quite well and that Mrs. Hall is with you and to remain with you some time at any rate. Mrs. Cad and I have amused ourselves the last week in reading novels, walking, and working. She is in daily expectation of getting letters from England.

Believe me, my dearest Mamma,
Yours most truly,
W. R.

Mrs. Cad had a letter from Sally Goldsborough lately. She says she expects to be up here the latter end of this month.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover, Delaware]

Germantown, November 1st, 1803

My dear Mamma,

I was never more amazed than to find by the receipt of your letter that you mean to move into town and I cannot help saying such a determination gives me great pain for I am very certain you will find Dover very disagreeable and so far from escaping trouble, I fear you will increase it.

Where you are you have as good a garden as can possibly be, and a very handsome one, the work of our own hands; besides fine orchards which abound with the best fruit, great part of which you planted, and a thousand other comforts that are not to be had in Town. The house you think of taking has instead of eight rooms, five, and one of them a mere closet without a chimney in it. I am very sorry to hear the servants behave amiss, but must believe rather than change their present abode they would alter their conduct. You know my dear Mother the farm you live on was always thought by Papa and all other physicians who knew it, to be the most healthy in the county, and all people agree in thinking it the handsomest. As to your suspicions respecting the interested views of brother Nicholas, I am really grieved at them and lament that such a thought could for a moment enter your head. In a letter from you last spring I recollect you mentioned you should never forget his affectionate attention about the duel and tho' you had had a thousand proofs of his tenderness you loved him more than you ever had done before that affair. You know he makes no profession but has I verily believe behaved to you as he would have done to his own Mother and I hope you will always have to think so. How many times when you have told him you did not expect to have kept him from his farm so long has he said if you lived 'till he wished you dead, you would remain on it a hundred years.

As to Mary's declaring she will not live in the country, it is a strange whim indeed, and such a one as I should never mind if that was the only reason for your changing your present home. Is it possible my dearest Mother you could for an instant doubt my staying with you and prefering your house to any other even tho' it should be in Dover? Since I left you I have received every kind attention from all our friends, and tho' I have made a visitation you know I only asked to stay a little longer with Mrs. Travis, who within a few days I am glad to see a little better tho' very unwell and wretched yet. My Aunt is still here and will not leave Mrs. T. before she goes to town. Do tell Mary Mrs. Cadwalader received her letter inclosing the one for Mrs. Erskine and I believe sent it. She has not time, or at least has not lately had, to write to Mary but requested me to tell her about the letter, which if I am not greatly mistaken I mentioned to you before. I hope you will judge for yourself and not be guided by any other opinion. All I have said proceeded entirely from affection but before you

move I wish you to recollect all the inconvenience arising from such a change. I ardently wish whatever you do may be most conducive to your comfort and that you may not repent.

Aunt desires her love to you. She is very well. God bless you my dear Mamma. Believe me to be most affectionately

Yours,

WILLIAMINA RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover, Delaware]

Philadelphia, December 11, 1803

My dear Mother,

Yesterday R. Wilds brought me your letter and promised to call early in the morning for the things I shall send by him. Aunt will make a rummage and means to send you among other things a little jar of walnuts and some capers and spice. The Souchong tea I will get; you ordered Bohea but such a thing is not to be had that you or any decent body would drink. The cayenne pepper I shall remember, and the curling tongs I have and beg Ann will take care of them. I got them last winter. Perhaps she will think them large but they are the right sort, indeed the hair is hardly curled at all. I will send you some Illinois nuts which Aunt gave me when at Germantown for you. Some of them are strong but you will think them better than none. Two pounds of salt petre I have ready and will if I can get one more in the morning. Mrs. Cadwalader sends her love and thanks you for the cider and ham and sends you a few beautiful flower seeds which she stole from Mrs. Erskine, or at least from a bundle Mrs. Smith sent her, and she says they will thrive the better from that circumstance, she knows. I told her of your wish to have some mould candles, but she said they were dearer than they have been for six years, and could not tell me where to meet with any good ones, and I know that even rush lights are 1/8 a pound. Where Wootten got his I cannot imagine. The medicine will go by this opportunity and two pairs of very handsome kid shoes for Mary. Mrs. Travis begs her kind love and after thanking you for the cider and ham desires me to beg as a favor you will let me stay with her. She is a little better but very unwell yet.

The lodging I have provided I hope will be agreeable to both Harry and Sally. The woman appeared very neat and clever and the situation I should

prefer to any I could have had a chance of. I think she had only a few, perhaps, two or three ladies with her. My aunt would have been very glad to have had them at her house but I thought situated as her family at present is, that would not be proper. Before I took the lodging I went to Mrs. Roberts in Walnut Street who was very sorry she had her house full, then I tried Miss Currie in Chestnut and Mrs. Maxwell in Market Street, then I spoke to Mrs. Carson in Arch Street who told me of this Mrs. Malcom a few doors from her house. Poor Mrs. W. Moore was buried in the same grave with her dear father. Judge Gates has made a request to Mr. Bond [British Consul to Philadelphia] from Mrs. Blodget which is to get her eldest boy at once into the British Navy which he says he will cheerfully do if she will not foolishly change her mind, but she's very apt to do that you know. She means to write to Blodget on the subject, but will eventually take her own way. Judge Gates says she is very well behaved and much altered for the better. Mrs. Cad sent me a wall flower for Mary which I will beg Wilds to take care of but if he cannot shall return it to her. I am sorry Ann was so particular about the cake—stale would have been better than none.

God bless you my dearest Mother and believe me sincerely

Yours

W. R.

I beg you to accept 3 pounds raisins and two of almonds which I now send, and I send poor James a few mint comfits as he is sick, just to let him see I remember him. The bag of medicine I shall send, with twelve lbs. of mould candles at 21 cents a pound. Mr. Rutter assured me they burnt extremely well and I think they look so, they are six to a pound. I desired him to put me up two pounds of souchong tea and a little keg of butter biscuit which I entreat you to accept from me. I have a black bear skin muff which was ten dollars. A different one would have cost eighteen, at least, but I chose to get a black plush hat and that cost ten dollars. It has feathers in it and is very becoming. I shall write on the back of the letter which I send by Wilds. Gillespy's bill is 8 dollars and 16 cents. I will inclose it after I pay it and get a receipt if it clears in time.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover]

In the letter written December 11 by Williamina to her mother, a few items need explanation.

The reason Willy secured lodgings for Henry and Sally Banning, his bride, was that this was shortly after their wedding and they were coming to Philadelphia on a visit. Sally was introduced to some of her husband's relatives. They were about to go to housekeeping in the old home on the Green and no doubt had many purchases to make, after the habit of newly married couples.

There had been a recent death in the family in Philadelphia. "Aunt Bond's" son-in-law, Mr. John Travis, had died and Mrs. Travis found Williamina Ridgely's company a great comfort to her.

Another allusion in the letter is to a request that Judge Gates had made to Mr. Bond, who was British Consul to Philadelphia.

It will be remembered that William Moore, Mrs. Phineas Bond's father, was a staunch adherent to the British Crown. Apparently her son had become a citizen of Great Britain as had his uncle, Thomas William Moore, and they were both in the diplomatic service of their country.

When the Ridgely children visited their uncle, Thomas Moore, in Newport, they wrote home that he was thoroughly an Englishman, a fact which would not endear him to his nephews in Dover.

From many allusions in the family correspondence over a period of some years, it is very clear that they agreed to disagree on the American-British question. There must have been many animated discussions, high words, almost if not quite ending in blows, the families were so divided. Surely Williamina Bond could not have married John Cadwalader, so ardent a champion of Washington, had she agreed with her grandfather and brother in their attitude toward Great Britain.

Dover, Nov. 14, 1804

Mamma was very sorry my dear Ann to find by your letter that you were no better for your ride. We hoped you would have been quite restored by it, and still hope that will be the case. Mamma's eyes are very sore, tho' she has put allum curd on them for two nights, and at present

they are less painful than they were before she did that, but I have endeavoured to keep her from work of every kind as much as possible, hoping by that means her eyes would get perfectly well, and for that reason I write to you. Mamma is as well as when you left her. She is daily wishing her little darling at home, for she fears he will take cold in returning as there is great probability the weather will be much worse than it is now. I do all I can to keep Mamma easy and satisfied at the absence of Charles George for let her say what she will, he I know is the object of her fears tho' she is fearful you and Sally will suffer by the cold in your ride down. Mamma says when you do come you and Sally must each put on two shifts, and let the sweet babe have a long *linen* not muslin shift, or something like it, next to his shirt before any flannel is put on him, and it must come down over his hands and feet. After that is on, wrap him well up in flannel.

I hope you will stay a day or two with Mrs. Bayard. There is no person in, or near Wilmington, you have been so long or so intimately acquainted with. Mamma and I desire our love to her. We are very glad to hear Mary McKee is so much better. Have you seen Miss Vining more than once? We desire our love to her. I am a great deal better than when you left home, tho' I cannot bear the least weight on my foot, and the outside of my leg feels very sore, tho' there is not any appearance of soreness on any part of it, and the swelling is within three days considerably abated. I sit up half of the day at a time, and knit a good deal so you see I am doing well. I had a long letter from poor Mrs. Jones lately. She is in wretched spirits. She desires her love to you, and wishes to see our dear little pet. She had not heard of my accident. Today and tomorrow too, there is to be a Quaker wedding. The first is Miss Howell to a Mr. Newbold of Philadelphia; the other Miss Mifflin to a Mr. Turner of Maryland. Her family it seems are all extremely displeased at the match. Mary is delighted with her new bonnet, which really is very handsome but I am not certain which I admire most, yours or hers. Betsey desires her love to Charity, and begs if she should see a threadcase, which she left behind her, that she will be so good as to send it down by you. I cannot tell what we should do without Betsey. She is so very clever and attentive; moves my poor leg with so much ease, and is so kind.

I have been very sorry that Mr. Wethered has not been to see us. I hope

he will before he leaves Kent. My love to his family. Tell Kitty I want to see her. Mamma desires a great deal of love to you all, beginning with the Lady of the Manor, and going down, with twenty kisses to her hopeful grandson. Miss Alston and I beg our love to all in the same way as above, and now thinking you will take this for my *will* I mean to conclude as I trust before I make one in earnest, I too, shall have a grandson to send kisses to. God bless my dear Ann

Your affectionate Sister
WILLIAMINA RIDGELY

Mamma has not seen her
tenant but inclos'd is five
dollars which she hopes
will do.

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely
at Doctor McKee's
near Wilmington
Delaware]

Willy had returned to Eden Hill in the spring of 1804 after more than a year's absence. That fall she suffered a severe fracture. While she was convalescent, her sister Ann paid a visit to Wilmington, apparently staying with the McKees. The "little darling" Willy mentions here was their brother Henry's first-born son, then not quite three months old, and Sally was the baby's seventeen-year-old mother.

For several years before 1808 regular correspondence, between Philadelphia and Eden Hill, had fallen to Willy Ridgely and Becky Bond.

February 14, 1808

My d[ea]r Willy

I received your letter dated the 5th on the 11th late in the evening; the next morning I sent to inquire when Mr. McLane went down & was mortified to find he had set off that morning. Mamma had repeatedly told me to write and beg you [*sic*] and desire some careful person to call for your mother's ring but I have been so indisposed with repeated cold that I have scarcely written to anybody. Pray get some careful neighbor of yours to

call for it and at the same time the Paper Harry wished my Brother to send by Mr. McClean.

I am rejoiced you are all so pleased with your new relation but from Mary's good taste and judgement I always looked to an excellent choice. I wish you w[oul]d follow her example but you must not settle in Dover. Give my love to Mary. I have not forgiven her yet as it was very *mean* in her not to tell me the secret when she was here.

The match you speak of surprised everybody; the lady's family have concluded to make the best of it and have taken him home, and many of their friends have visited them. I can give you no account of him as my acquaintance is very large I did not feel it necessary to increase it & therefore have not paid my compliments.

Fanny's youngest is a sweet little girl; she has called it Margaret after Mr. E[rskine]'s single sister who is devoted to Fanny & her children. We persuaded them to name the child after her tho neither of them liked the name.

Nan says you have forgotten her—you never send your love to her. I tell her tis to make her write to you but indeed her time is so much taken up at school that she has not time for anything else.

We all join in love to you, your Mother, Brothers, Mrs. R, and Mr. & Mrs. M. I hope the little Babe is getting well. Mama begs to know if Mary is as fond of her Darling Child as ever or whether she has resigned her rights in him—he is a fine creature and I do not wonder at her attachment to him.

Y[ou]r affectionate
R. B.

[*Addressed to* Miss Ridgely
Near Dover
Kent
Delaware State]

The letter of February 14th, 1808, written by R. B. needs some explanation. The writer was Rebecca Bond, a younger sister of Mrs. Cadwalader and Mrs. Travis. The new relation was Dr. William W. Morris of Baltimore, who had recently married Mary Ridgely and

had come to live in Dover. We have no clue to "the match" which surprised everyone.

Fanny was Mrs. Cadwalader's daughter and the writer's niece, who a few pages back was telling of her life among the aristocrats of England. She and her husband, David Erskine, returned to Philadelphia before the date of this letter, as Mr. Erskine had been appointed Minister Plenipotentiary by the British government.

"Nan," who felt forgotten, was Nancy Travis, the writer's little niece.

The Philadelphia relatives joined in love to Mrs. Charles Ridgely, Willy's mother, her brothers, Nicholas and Henry Moore, and Sally Banning, Henry's wife. The "little babe" was John, Sally's infant, and the "darling child" Charles George Ridgely, an older son of Henry Moore and Sally, to whom his Aunt Mary had devoted herself prior to her marriage. "Mamma" is Mrs. Phineas Bond, the writer's mother.

In April, 1808, Williamina Ridgely died. Her mother made a notation that Willy rode out to the Chancellor's (her brother, Nicholas Ridgely) to dinner one day, apparently in excellent health. She was taken ill shortly after the meal, returned home quite sick, and suffered intensely till afternoon of the following day, April 21st, when she died. Her symptoms suggest appendicitis, of which they knew nothing at that time. Williamina's mother wrote a few days later to her niece, Williamina Cadwalader, telling her of their affliction.

You will probably, my dear Mrs. Cadwalader, have heard of my late affliction before this meets you. When I wrote you last I mentioned the sufferings my now Angel daughter experienced last Summer, and inform'd you that she at the time I was writing enjoy'd more perfect health than she had known for several years past. I then flatter'd myself with hopes of her being continued for many years to come a blessing, not only to her own family and intimate friends but to every human creature within her reach. She was indeed a blessing, a treasure to me, beyond description. If I know my own heart I am sure it was fill'd with gratitude to my Almighty maker for all his mercies. I have, for two and twenty years, most earnestly prayed for perfect resignation. My God sustain'd me when my

heart was breaking at the time of my dear husband's death. I look'd on my five precious Infants and recollected that my duty then was to double my endeavours for their benefit. I exerted myself for their sakes and my heavenly father was graciously pleased to grant my most ardent prayers, hopes and wishes—they grew up just such as my soul delighted in beholding. Two now are all I have left. But I must not, I dare not, to murmur; O Lord of Heaven and earth make me I most humbly beseech thee what I sh[oul]d be to prove acceptable to thee. Pity and forgive my griefs!—I know that my beloved children must be now much happier than any enjoyment in this world c[oul]d have made them. I know I shall not be long here and I hope to be reunited to them and all my beloved & departed friends in those regions of pure delight when every tear shall be wiped from our eyes and everlasting joys succeed to pain and sorrows.

Forgive me my dear Niece—my valued friend forgive me for writing as I do. I hope and believe that you love me, and to you I must pour forth my heart. You will, I am sure, pity me. You knew my dear, my angelic Willy—but believe me she was by no means wholy known to anybody but myself in this world. Her fortune, tho' not large, was such as brought her yearly at least three times as much as she had occasion to expend on herself tho' she was always dress'd genteel and fit to appear before anybody. She was one of the best economists I ever knew. She improv'd her landed property by building, planting orchards, and ornamental trees. She lately purchased in the Bank five shares. Yet she gave away to real objects of charity more for several years past than she expended on her own person, and she gave in such a manner as plainly evinced she did not wish that those she gave to sh[oul]d even know from whence it came.

Near the end of Williamina Ridgely's life she ordered a reeded cup or can of silver. It was made in 1807 by James Howell of Philadelphia, an apprentice of Joseph Richardson, a distinguished silversmith of that place. It is now in the old Ridgely House on the Green. A little later Henry Moore Ridgely and his cousin Thomas Cadwalader had some correspondence with regard to orders for silver articles to be made by Mr. Howell. There is one letter to Williamina's mother from Thomas Cadwalader; enclosed were drafts of inscriptions to be used in marking the silver. The inscriptions would indicate that the silver

articles mentioned were a posthumous gift from Williamina to her brother Henry Moore Ridgely and to her half brother Nicholas Ridgely.

In 1809, Thomas Cadwalader wrote to Henry Moore Ridgely in respect to a coffee pot made by this same Mr. Howell. Although this letter was written after Williamina's death it relates to a previous order, and is placed with the former one.

Philad[elphi]a 15th of 10th Mo. 1807

I have to acknowledge the receipt of thy favour of 7th Instant & the Silver Tankard mentioned therein, weighing 37 oz. 15 duct. Having lately declined following the Silversmiths business myself I have transfered my Stock in trade to James Howell a worthy young man who was for several years a partner with me, to him I have delivered thy Order & have no doubt but he will execute it in all respects agreeable to thy wish, the Tankard is of good Silver & I have enjoined him to make thy spoons of the same silver. Altho I have declined the business yet I feel myself under obligation to my former customers & will chearfully render them any service in my power, in this particular Instance I shall interest myself so far as to see that the work be well done, indeed I have not the least doubt but my friend Howell will render himself worthy of the confidence & encouragement of my former friends & customers. The spoons will be done in about a fortnight & the person who brings the order for them may either call upon me, or at James Howells at my former residence in Front Street

I am with due respect thy friend
JOSEPH RICHARDSON

[*Addressed to* Williamina Ridgely
Dover, Delaware]

Philad[elphi]a 26 August 1809

Dear Madam,

In compliance with your Letter of the 15th we have ordered the Coffee Pot, and Cans, to be made by Mr. Howell:—The silver is to be equal to the English standard, and we have taken great pains in fixing on a pattern, for the Coffee Pot. The cans are not articles in which much taste can be dis-

played. Howell had none ready made, that you would have been satisfied with:—He has the work now in hand, & whenever it shall be finished, you shall hear from me.

I enclose Drafts of Inscriptions. Mary & I prefer the old english characters. You will be so good as to make your choice from them. . . .

My last letter from my Mother is of the 4th of July. She was well and in most of her letters she enquires after you.

Mary begs to be affectionately presented to you. She and our three sons are well.

Yours with great respect and regard
THOS CADWALADER

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
near Dover, Delaware]

Mrs Ridgely

Philadª Novr 20th 1807

Bot. of James Howell

12 Silver Table Spoons. wt 30 oz $52. 00
Engraving Inscription on do. 2. 00
$54. 00
Recd 37. 15 dwts of Silver @ $1. 13 . . . . . 42 65
$11 35

Recivd Payment James Howell

Philad[elphi]a, 12 Oct: 1809

Dear Sir:

Owing to our not being satisfied with the Coffee Pot made by Mr. Howell, he is making another one which will not be finished for a fortnight.

The Balance in my hands, due your Mother is ---------- $198.31

Viz: Bal. of Acco't rendered

25. Jan'y:	118.31	
July Div'd. on her 5		
Shares U. S. B[an]k Stock	80.	
		198.31

Yours very faithfully,
THOS. CADWALADER

H. M. Ridgely Esq[ui]re

[*Addressed to* Henry M. Ridgely, Esquire,
Dover, Delaware]

George Wemyss Ridgely
1781–1800

New Castle Dec. 11th 1799

Dear Madam.

I have just time to write you a few lines, as I suppose you will be uneasy to hear from me. The *Ganges* has not yet got to this place nor will not I suspect for a day or two yet, as the wind is a head therefore I am in hopes I shall be able to equip myself. I shall have on my undress uniform in an hour or two, & shall then have my Dress clothes made. Polk has gone to the City to procure swords & dirks & pistols &c. for himself, & me as there is none to be had here, or at Wilmington. Riddle is not at home but one Bird who, I beleave, is in partnership with him has beheaved verry clever to me, he sent to Wilmington for a hat for me & offered to send to the City for swords. Brother yesterday gave Bines your letter & spoke to him, himself, & he immediately promised to let me have what money was necessary. I shall retain what money I have in my hands to pay for my sword, Dirk & 1/2 Boots, & shoes, &c which Polk is to procure for me, & get money from Bines to pay Bird with; as he is to procure everything else for me that is necessary.

Blight's big ship which at first was called the *Oriental* but now changed for the *China*, is coming down the river. She is said to be very ugly, & too large to pass between this & the City, & 'tis said will never go higher up the river than here, as she has been once foundered already a coming down. I have no more to tell you only that I saw Bayard yesterday who told us that we were first appointed to go out on Board the *Philadelphia*, which is not expected to go out this winter, & that Mr. Stoddert sent one of his clerks to him to know if we were anxious to go immediately who informed him we were, he then appointed us on board the *Ganges*, which if it had not been the case you would have seen us in Uniform this Winter in Dover. I can only add that we are both in a high glee, & hope that you are all the same. I could tell you many more things but have not time.

Beleave me yours as ever
GEORGE W. RIDGELY

I hope I have no need to remind you to be careful of *Cub*.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
Dover, Delaware]

On the 13th of December his half-brother, Nicholas, wrote the letter which follows—truly a remarkable letter with its sanguine hope of the officers being polite and obliging to George.

New Castle, Friday Evening
13 Dec. 1799

Honoured Madam,

This morning my brother George got on Board the Ganges, at this Place. He went off in very good Spirits. I have seen Capt. Mullowny three or four Times. He is a fine portly looking Man, of very mild and pleasant Manners, and agreeable Conversation. He very kindly promised to take Care of George and to give him all the Instruction in his Power. I have also seen Mr. Mercer the first Lieutenant and Mr. Murdock the 2d Lieutenant. They have promised their Attention to George.

In Addition to the Bedding, Clothing and other Things which George took on Board, I sent him this Afternoon, Tea, Coffee, Chocolate, Gin,

Brandy, Sugar and several other Things which the Officers told me would be very convenient and comfortable to him.

I have endeavoured to procure him everything proper for his Situation, and I have no Doubt he will fare very well. The Disposition of the officers gives me great Pleasure, for I think he will find them polite and obliging.

I know not the Destination of the Ship. The Capt[ain] is directed not to open his Orders till he gets to Sea. She will go tonight or tomorrow morning to Rheedy Island, and in a few Days will proceed with some Vessels she is to convoy to Sea. The Capt[ain] hinted to me she would be back in the Spring. I presume she is going on the West India Station. Rush is not on Board her. Mr. Polk went to Philad[elphi]a on Wednesday. He is not returned.

I am Madam,
Your dutiful Son
NICHOLAS RIDGELY

The *Ganges* sailed on down the bay and, off the Capes, George wrote again, December 23rd, 1799. There is something wistful in the postscript written as the last trace of Delaware land was fading from the lad's view—"you cannot hear from me." As usual "Cub," his little horse, was on his mind and he urged his family at Eden Hill to be good to him.

Off the [Capes] . . . *Ganges*—Sloop of War
D[ec.] 23d 1799

Dear Madam,

This letter is to be carried to Land by the Pilate & I am so very much hurried that I can scarce get time to write you this scrawl. I am very much pleased with the Officers & all the Crew of this ship. I have been shown particular attention by the Capt[ain] & Lieutenants of the ship. Yesterday we were all stationed, & had our men appointed to us, I am much pleased with my station. There are nine midshipmen on board. On Sunday last Polk, & myself receaved our Warrants. I dined . . . that day with the Capt. & the day following . . . [with] . . . the Lieutenants (for they do not mess together) which was a particular honour as many Midshipmen are here who were on board much longer & never yet have had that honour. I

think I have had particular attention shown me by all the officers. I have no more to say only that P. & myself are both well.

Farewell. Take care of Cub
& beleave me your aff[ec]t[ionate] Son
GEO. W. RIDGELY

I expect to be out on a long
Cruise & you cannot hear from me.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
Dover
Delaware State
to be put in the mail
at Philadelphia or Boat]

Ganges off New Castle May 5th 1800

My dear Mother

We have just anchored off New Castle after a very disagreeable cruise, in which we have seen some parts of the world where no other ship belonging to the United States or any of its inhabitants has ever been before us (that is Carthaginia & the Spanish coast of South America). We were not permitted to go into Carthaginia & only saw it as we sailed along it. We lay seven weeks in harbour at Boca Chica, a small town just with in the first forts, waiting for our Convoy which we lost the third Day after we left there. From thence we bent our Course for the Havannah where we lay two weeks, & left that place with another convoy which we lost in a Day or two, & now we have at length reached New Castle without any Convoy.

The Capt. brought some passengers with him several of whom are very bad with the Small Pox.

I am very uneasy on account of not hearing from you & if I do not hear from you all by Wednesday I shall believe you are some of you dead. I should write to you all most assuredly if I had time but this is not like *College* where you have but 4 hours to sleep all night & have to watch the rest.

When we were in the Havanna there were 8 or 10 Spanish 74's & 1010 gunships lying there some of which has never been out since they have been built while the English are running within the mouth of the harbours & taking their ships Daily.

I hope John Clark's family is well, his conduct towards me when I was last at New Castle was very genteel, & clever; he wished me to go to Philadelphia at the time Polk went which I declined, he thought, I wanted Cash, & immediately offered to let me have any quantity I wished.

Brother N. R. also beheaved much better to me than I could have expected. The best of fathers could not possible have beheaved more affectionately. I shall write to him immediately as soon as I know where he is but as there is Court this month I cant tell in which county he is at present. I hope my Colt is well, & taken good care of. I'll tell you all the News next time I write which will be every time I can get an opportunity. Direct your letters to me on board the Ganges off New Castle untill I tell you farther. I send you an exact account of the money I have expended since I have been on board.

I am your truly affectionate Son
GEORGE W. RIDGELY

	D	C
December 15th. 1799 to the Mess	6	0
21st. To nettings for my hammock	1	0
27 To finishing cloathes	2	0
27 To Buttons from Polk	3	0
January 5th. 1800 to shoes from ditto	2	50
14 To 2 pair Pantaloons (nankeen)	6	0
February for washing at different times whilst laying at Bocha Chica	3	0
March		
April 15th. for washing at the Havanna	3	50
for Sundries purchased at the Havanna	3	0
22 for a uniform round about Jacket	7	0
	37.	½ Dol.

Had in my possession when I came on the Ganges 62 Dollars remaining 25 Dollars.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ann Ridgely
Dover
Delaware State
P Mail]

In June of 1800 George was at Baltimore waiting to sail on the *Insurgent.* Meanwhile he was boarding at Fells Point, near the docks in the Baltimore harbor, and meeting his aunt, his father's sister Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Dorsey of Elkridge.

The following letters were written while he was waiting for the *Insurgent,* and after he was on board the ship in the Chesapeake Bay.

During his stay in Baltimore a list was made of the items he was to take with him, as follows:

LIST OF ARTICLES BELONGING TO GEORGE W. RIDGELY, 5 June 1800.

1 uniform coat
1 watch coat lined with red
1 round jacket
1 p[ai]r cassimere breeches
1 p[ai]r new white silk hose
1 p[ai]r old white ones
2 p[ai]r nankeen breeches
2 p[ai]r overalls (Blue cloth)
2 black silk neck handkerchiefs
3 silk pocket handkerchiefs
3 flannel underjackets
3 p[ai]r old cotton hose
2 p[ai]r silk & cotton old hose
2 p[ai]r new cotton stockings
6 p[ai]r worsted stockings
9 muslin cravats
4 towels
1 p[ai]r nankeen trousers
1 bottle Mint-water
1 vial Cinnamon D[itt]o
a grater, Nutmegs, Cloves—
Cash going off 20th June, 60 Dol.

Fells Point July 11th. 1800

I have just now taken time my dear Mother to write you a few lines to let you know that we are to sail on Tuesday next. The Captain has received orders sometime ago. We are to go just between this & the West Indies. There are some French privateers off our Coast that have taken upwards of 20 American vessels within this few weeks past. The Agent says we shall be out not more than three months, but you need not be uneasy if we are gone 2 years as there is not the least danger.

There is to be 20 Midshipmen on board off us this cruise; if Polk is coming he had better hasten.

Campbell was in town the day before yesterday, he came on board & inquired for me but I was out. I was very sorry I did not see him, he is going with Truxton.

Tell Mary I am obliged to her for her ring off which I have had a very large & handsome breast Pin made, the making of which & mending my sleave buttons cost me 11/3. I have nothing to tell you now only that it is as hot almost as Carthagina & very healthy here at present.

Beleave me your ever dutiful son

GEORGE W. RIDGELY

There are to be four of us in a mess & each to put in 20 doll[ar]s. We go on board to live tomorrow.

	Dolls	Cents
To the Mess	20—	0
To board to Mrs. Forbes	11—	50
To Jewelers Account	1—	50
	32	0

Do not make yourself uneasy with respect to money for me if you cannot get it handy.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover
State of Delaware]

Insurgent July 17th. (1800)

Dear Mother I have just taken time to let you know that we are to sail in a few minutes. I have nothing more to tell you. Give yourself no uneasiness on my account. I have every thing necessary to take to sea remember me to all who inquire tell Brother I will write to him from Norfolk if I have time. Goodbye

GEO. W. RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware State]

Insurgent, off Anapolis July 21st

Dear Mother,

I have just taken time to write you a few lines as we are very busy, & I cannot tell whether I can get them in the mail or not. I receaved all the letters & money from Polk. We are to take in our provisions at this place & do not expect to be out long. The accommodations, & the treatment of the officers on board this ship is quite different from that in the Ganges. We have fifteen Midshipmen on board, & they all seem to be very clever we have six in our mess the mess was made up before Polk came but I prevailed on them to take him in. I receaved a letter from Wootten the other day & one from Brother Nicholas which I must answer. You will therefore excuse my filling up this sheet with nonsense. Farwell & beleave me your dutiful son & sincere friend,

GEORGE W. RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover
State of Delaware.]

LaInsurgente, off Anapolis, July 21st 1800

Dear Brother,

I have now taken time to write you a few lines but I am uncertain whether I shall be able to get them in the mail.

I received your very acceptable letter by Polk and should have answered it before, but the day Polk came to town, we dropt out in the stream and I have not had time since. I should have written to you soon after I came to town but had not time. You may assure yourself that the advice you

gave me I shall follow. We have fifteen midshipmen on board of this ship, and have about one hundred seventy men. We are to get the rest of the men at Norfolk. She carries three hundred and fifty. We have orders to take in provisions for only three months.

I expect when we return we shall make Boston our port, as Fletcher's family lives near that place. Farewell and believe me your affectionate Brother and sincere friend,

GEORGE W. RIDGELY

[*To* Nicholas Ridgely, Esquire
Dover, Delaware]

Insurgent; Hampton Roads; July 30th 1800

Dear Mother,

I have now taken time to write you the last letter probably that I shall have an opportunity of sending as it is quite uncertain at what time we shall leave this place, but if we stay here any time as I think we shall I will write to you all before I go out.

I am going to write to aunt Dorsey and Sam Ridgely after I finish this letter. We have had a very tiresome time getting down the river, & I think this, of all the places I ever saw is the most disagreeable to lay at.

We have had every indulgence since we have been in this ship that we could possible have expected, but I fear that all I can do I can never bring myself to like the life. We have as pleasant births & live as well as any midshipmen in the Navy & have met with the greatest Politeness from the Officers, except in one instance when the Capt. took the liberty of striking one of the Midshipmen with the speaking trumpet; he intends writing to the Secretary of the Navy, & if he does not get satisfaction to resign.

Wynkoop, Polk, & myself are all very well.

Beleave me
Yours, etc.
GEO. W. RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware State
P Mail]

There is nothing further from George Wemyss Ridgely's pen. There are several allusions to his fate. The *Insurgent* was sunk on the voyage starting from Fells Point, Baltimore, in July, 1800, and no trace was ever found of a survivor.

The mourning at Eden Hill was profound. Ann, the mother, showed her usual fortitude after the blow, but little Ann was never again the same. Perhaps her health was declining before this time; certain it is that she grew ever more fragile afterward. She and George had romped together as children, and some of her vivacity was lost after he died.

A letter follows which was written by Ann Moore Ridgely to her daughter Williamina. It has seemed appropriate to place it here, as it contains the only allusion we have from Ann to her grief at the loss of her son George.

Monday 15th August 1803

My beloved Child

On Saturday morn[in]g last I had the pleasure of receiving two letters from you and one from Mrs. Cadwalader. One of yours was as old a date as the 19th July, the one intended by Denny, the other the 7th Inst[ant.] I rejoice at all times to hear that you and all our friends are well, but at this Season particularly I am anxious to receive such intelligence. We are all well here, and some day this week Harry intends going up to Wilmington and I expect Ann will return with him when he comes home.

I am not accustom'd to mention any act of charity that it happens to be in my power to bestow, but as I have for an hour past rec[eive]d more real satisfaction from giving a few shillings away than I ever before experienced from contemplating the best purchase I ever made for ten times the sum, I must tell you that it was a man on whom it might easily be discover'd that sickness as well as age and poverty had made their ravages; but every word he utter'd was a convincing proof that this misfortune had rather added to than diminish'd the firmness of his mind. And yet he seem'd a perfect picture of humility and ask'd only for one single Shilling. I ask'd him to set down and he mention'd that he had once before seen me at which time I appear'd very hearty and that he was sorry to see that I did not seem so at present. I reply'd "that ev'ry body almost had troubles

and mine were not small ones—that upwards of three years ago my youngest Son had gone to sea and that I had never heard of him since." He s[ai]d he hop'd he did not go without my consent. I told him he was always too good and dutiful to have done that. Then Madam, s[ai]d the poor old man, still hope—God is all powerful, and may we not trust that mercy w[hi]ch restored the prodigal will succor protect and restore the dutiful, the virtuous Son. He then rose from his chair, stood in the door that leads into the Piazza and made a very short but one of the most beautiful prayers I ever heard in my life. The Language w[oul]d have astonished you, for tho' it was evidently quite unstudied it was equal to anything I ever read or heard uttered by any person breathing. As soon as he had finished this he bowed and went off. It might seem strange to some people that such an incident should be minded by anybody, yet I acknowledge I feel happy from it and may you also my dear child feel so too.

Mary Ridgely
1777–1855

Dover, May 2d. 1802

Mama appears to think it so absolutely necessary for some of the family to write to your Ladyship, that I, poor sleepy soul, am here at my desk, pen in hand, and not a word to say. I have been begging Mama and Willy this half hour for some news to tell you, but neither will assist me to a sentence, except half a bushel of love and all that, which you can better imagine than I write, but pray Child don't be uneasy about home, for you will find tis all just as you left it, no tis better. The garden, notwithstanding the frost this morning looks quite charming. The Woodbine, the Old Maid roses, etc. are in bloom, and very sweet, and all my y[ar]d flowers alive.

Harry dines (by particular invitation) at Mr. Clayton's as also does Mr. and Mrs. T. Clayton and Mr. Macombe. Willy has gone to walk to meet Mary Bassett and Ann Garnett, who I expect will be here to Tea. I have got every body's consent to going to Philadelphia, but my own, and here

I stand quite undetermined, but as Mr. Clayton goes on Wednesday it will soon be settled. I shall if I go stop at Mr. Wethered's door for you, and beg, if you chuse to go up, you will be ready, for you know the stage drivers hate to be kept waiting, and at any rate, if I sh[oul]d not go Mr. Clayton will call, so that you can, but Mama bids me to say I shall come. She is very anxious to hear from you, and expects a long letter on Tuesday even[in]g. The one received is quite a note. Tim Handson has a bantling—I have not heard whether Son or Daughter. Mama and Willy join me in love to Mrs. Wethered and the family. I suppose you will be so pleased with Prospect Hill there will be no getting you home. Your *cats* are all well—*Ann very lusty* indeed. As this was a matter of moment to you I write it, but am quite ashamed to write of *Cats*, but you know they are the only inhabitants of *your Tea room.*

Yours as ever,
Affectionately
M. R.

[*To* Miss Ann Ridgely
Prospect Hill
near
Wilmington
Delaware]

From Mary Ridgely to her Mother:

May 9th, 1802

I am really my dear Mother quite unhappy at not hearing from you yesterday, and should be more so if I did not recollect how often letters by the mail are delayed.

We arrived here about one on Friday noon. Mrs. C. was out when I got here, Fanny in her Chamber, to whom I instantly was carried by her own desire. She was sitting up, Mr. E[rskine] was with her, and in the Nurse's lap was a lovely Boy of four days old. Her children are indeed lovely Creatures and her Husband one of the most agreable young Men I have ever seen, genteel, sensible, sociable and handsome; I am utterly astonished that any person could see and not admire him—to be acquainted with him and not do it is impossible. Fanny is just the same as she ever was, she does

not appear one hour older for having a husband and two children. If there is any difference she is fatter than formerly. Both the Children are like their Father, Fanny's eyes are blue, Tom's I think will be black.

Yesterday morn[in]g I took a ride, in the afternoon I went to Aunts and drank tea I was asked to dinner but did not go. Aunt was here the even[in]g I came up. She looks much better than when I saw her last. Aunt and Kitty Wethered went yesterday to Aunts, Becky Bond took them home with her in the carriage.

Ann called to see the Hamilton's (or rather Peggy Hamilton) yesterday. Today she goes with Becky H. to call on Kitty Wethered, who, with Nancy, they have invited to drink Tea on Monday and dine on Tuesday. I have this moment heard they have call'd on me. Molly told Ann she supposed I was ceremonious enough to wait for a visit, and she replied beyond a doubt I was. Mrs. Cadwalader and all her family are extremely kind and wish me very much to remain some time with them which I certainly should with pleasure do was it possible for me to be easy about you all. Aunt is very much hurt that Nancy will not stay at her house, she is very kind and good. Mrs. C. says if I will stay she will fix it so as to have her here. But I know that could not be convenient, her house is already crowded. Besides I suppose she is better pleased to be with the Rowans. Mr. Bond's from home, and not expected till Tuesday. Aunt is much pleased with the present you sent her. Becky is not well and exceedingly thin.

Tom Cadwalader is much improved he is tall and quite fat. Everything and everybody is quite natural to me. I seem quite at home (as formerly).

There are a vast number of elegant new buildings erected since I was in Town before. The Water House up this street looks well as you go up Town but not as you come into Market Street. River water is used I believe altogether. One of the little Pumps is at our door. I saw Sally Goldsborough Friday, Saturday and today. She is much improved, but says she leaves school the 25 of this month—where to go she knows not. Mrs. Blodget has not yet gone to Huntington, she is with her children, just over the Schuylkill, her Husband in Boston. With love to all believe me as ever your dutiful and affectionate

M. R.

I have refused a ride to finish my letter and will now go out with Fanny.

Tuesday, August 13, 1805

I feel much better my dear Mama from having received two letters last even[in]g one from Willy after you arrived at Wilmington and one *for you* from Ann, which induces one to suppose you were most agreeably surprised on your arrival at my Aunts, and I certainly hope the ride may prove of great service to you, indeed I have no doubt it will particularly if you extend it to the Yellow Springs, which I presume you will do. You must make yourself quite easy about home, every thing goes on very well, and I find myself quite equal to the management of the Farm and house. Yesterday I sent as you desired for Green and went up with him to the Granery, he measured up your wheat, there is of the new (besides about ten or fifteen bushel which Thomas allow'd to sow) 56 and a half bushels new—of the old, there is 39 and a half bushels. The new wheat is very fine but the old is as bad as need be, but Green say's such as can be sold for nine shillings and advises strongly its being sold. There is also a parcel of yellow corn in the Granery two years old which has been so long beat off that the weavil is eating the heart all out, and it will soon be spoiled for sale. I had it run through the fan and measured there was 30 bushels and a half. There is also in the same place a parcel which did belong to Thomas, of last years; in the carriage house loft there is about 60 bushels, of two years, and all hands allow that in the corn-crib there is three hundred bushels. Green says tis impossible to use on your Farm more than one hundred between now and the time new corn comes in use, but if you keep it, your family you know will destroy *all*. I wish you w[oul]d give me leave to sell your *old* wheat and *old* corn. Indeed tis a pity to waste it and this will be the case if you keep it here. Do for once trust to my management, I am sure when you see how cleverly I can do, you will be pleased, and let me send you at once the money which will be more agreeable to you, particularly at this time, than letting so much be ruined. I was mentioning it to Harry last even[in]g he strongly advised it, and a hundred and more dollars w[oul]d I am sure not be amiss to you now. I will, depend upon it, leave sufficient at home. Today a young man of the name Thomas Concieler, son of the old man who lived on my farm, came to rent your Duck Creek Farm for himself and Brothers, he says he has force for a large Place, and as he knows that perfectly sh[oul]d like it very much, he says two hundred dollars is lower than any body would wish to have it at, that Graham, he

knows, has this year made at least fifteen hundred bushel of corn and four hundred of wheat, that anybody w[oul]d give you as rent half of all the grain made on it, which w[oul]d be three times as much as you now get, that he will take care of your Timber, etc. I told him I rather thought you had bargained with another man, but that I would write to you immediately and beg an answer at once, he is to come down again in a few day's to know. Graham, he says, has been sawing up your timber, were I in your place I w[oul]d not let any body have it for less than half. Write to me at once and tell me, also say yes about your grain. Pete and Jim are cutting and drawing and Dover getting shingles out of the woods to mend the stables which I hope to have quite done before you get home. Green's Brother has so bad health that he intends going up the country to live. I am quite disappointed and agreeably, in Martin he is as good a child as can be. Betsey Worner went home yesterday even[in]g. She was sent for the day before. Bishop died last night. If I was his wife how glad I sh[oul]d be. Tell me what you wish done with this calf in the yard. The child stay's with me, he is as good as an angel, Harry and Sally have been twice to see me. Dr. Horsey says if you can take Ann to the Yellow Springs and stay a while he has no doubt of her soon getting well. Remember me to both the girls, to Aunt, Mr. & Miss B, to Tom and his wife, and Mrs. T. and Nancy, Ann says Tom's boy is a lovely one. Write soon and often, and make yourself easy about home. Yours my dear Mad[a]m most affec[tionate]ly.

George has gone in today to see his parents, I have sent Sally an *Applepye* to *buy him back* again this even[in]g. His father wishes him to be with me very much.

Harry gains strength daily, his boy is more lovely every hour and Sally very good. My cold is all right, so be contented about home and try to recruit yourself.

Addressed Dover August 14—
[Mrs. Ridgely
Care of P. Bond Esquire
Chestnut Street
Phila.]

The "Dover" mentioned in the preceding letter was one of the workmen at the farm.

Between August 13 and August 30, 1805, Mary Ridgely wrote five times to her Mother and Willy, who had been called to Germantown when her sister Ann became seriously ill while visiting there. Her report on her activities during the two weeks makes the most detailed and graphic account we have of everyday life at Eden Hill Farm.

The little boy she calls George was Henry's son, more frequently spoken of as Charles or Charles George.

Dover August 17th, 1805 Saturday

Your letter my dear Willy and one *for you* from Miss Bond dated this day week reach'd me last night, and have very much damped the pleasure the letter I got on Monday night gave me, by the next mail I hope to get a more favorable one. The agitation Ann must have felt on seeing Mama and yourself doubtless made her feel weaker than common, tell her I can go through so much fatigue in nursing that I really wish I was with her. She can witness too *as well as Mama* what a good hand I am to make sick people take every thing proper for them and keep up their spirits, besides turn-a-bout is fair play, and last spring she nursed me through a severe spell, and I have often thought she injured herself by being with me when I was ill in the Fall . . far from thinking Mama's ride would injure her, I have constantly thought it would prove serviceable to her, as well as to yourself. Tell her to be quite easy about home, every thing bids fair to do well, and I hope will. I wish you would prevail on her to sell her wheat (the old I mean) and corn. She must know that many dollars are waiting, and will be lost to her, which she really wants by not doing it. The wool I will attend to. I had told Leah some day's before about spinning, but she said she cou[l]d not card, that it w[oul]d give her a pain in the wrist, this morning I told her to get ready betimes on Monday for spinning wool, she made me no answer, I shall not be sorry if she refuses, for I am tired to death of her, and if she does not do as I direct, I shall discard her without any hesitation, I never met with a more worthless lazy vile temper'd beast since I was born, one *more* worthless cannot be found, and there is a chance of a better, and as to being of any service in the night I might as well attempt to put animation into a brick wall as to rouse her. Rachel sleeps in the cot in my room, and the child sleeps with me. Betsey Warner to *my*

satisfaction is at home, you know I never loved such company, particularly fretful children. Mrs. Warner has once call'd to enquire about you all, she is a very kind neighbor. Betsey Cook to my mortification, came out on Tuesday, she told me she came to stay with me while I was alone. I was plaguedly vex'd but I cou[l]d not turn her out you know, and she was so *delicately fearful* that on hearing a *poor innocent rat* in the night she began to *scream*, and the poor child who was in a fine sleep in my arms, was frightened to such a degree that I thought he would go into fits, and the consequence was that I had to walk him about in my arms and talk to him all the time or rock him in the cradle he would not go to any body but myself, and I was up almost the whole of the night. I wish'd her at the D - - - l. The next even[in]g she went home, indeed I wish'd her there the even[in]g before, for Harry, Sally, and Dr. Horsey, were here till bed time and I hate *trumpery* with my company, indeed I ought not to feel lonesome for scarcely a day passes, when Harry and Sally or Dr. Horsey don't call to see me, for which kindness I am much endebted to them, and if any of our neighbors come I shall be as attentive to them as need be, but indeed I want no children but George to be here, he is a dear Angel, and yesterday I perceived had another tooth through. Old Mrs. Clayton called at the door on Sunday to ask for you, and yesterday afternoon Sally and Jem, stop[pe]d at it and without asking for *me* or getting out of the chair sent up stairs to desire the child might be brought out for her to look at, and I sent Rachel down to tell her the child was with me, and if she would light I should be down stairs *where she would see him*, they did, and saw the child, Jem play'd with him, and prais'd him, *she* never as much as said he was a fine child. I made him *crawl*, *walk* and *stand* alone, he push'd the chair before him all about, then got my pocket handkerchief and blew his nose on it, shook his fists at her, made mouths, and play'd every trick I ever saw him, I was delighted to see him *so good*, 'twas just what I wanted for Sally Clayton. She said "*poor child he was ruin'd already.*" I wish such impertinent hussys always met such people as me, it w[oul]d be very serviceable *to them*, however I asked her to stay to tea, but she went to town for which I was not sorry as I soon had better company.

Sally wrote me word this morning that Mr. McLane goes up on Monday, and I shall send the tongues by him there are only four that I will send. I am sorry I did anything about my gown as I have altered it myself to set

very well, but pray continue to send a pair of shoes, and Sally also, I am barefoot: black kid. I wrote Mama a long letter, which I hope she has got e'er this, and will answer immediately, ask her what is to be done with the calf in the yard, tis a pity to let it get all the milk unless tis for veal. I shall certainly try to get some person to look after things on the farm. Dover has mended the stables and done them up very well, one he made a door for, and really they are now quite comfortable. Altho the Chancellor has been in town since Tuesday he has never call'd to see me, he made his home at Harry's. I gave Mama an account of all her grain in my letter, and now wait to hear from her. I shall leave room to add a line tomorrow and Monday. Adieu for today.

Monday 19. . Yesterday Harry and Sally spent with me, we were both persuading Harry to go to Lancaster for a while, he is so fatigued with business here that tis impossible for him to get well. And altho he is not more unwell than when you left hom. . . . . think him better, he has been up late every night during the last week attending Court, which is not yet over, and has a bad cold, which indeed every body has, tis a general complaint. I have not seen two people free from it. Sally has some message for you. She promised to let me know this morning, but has not yet. I have sent Rachel in with the child to see his Father and Mother, she was to return in an hour, when I expect to hear; sore eyes are so common with the children in town now, that I don't like George to be there too much, he is very well except a cold in his head, and that is getting well. He has some new engaging trick every hour, he is so very fond of me he will scarcely go for a minute to his mother, she is quite jealous, *but I dare not tell her so.* She expects her mother and Betsey McKee tomorrow. I hope to hear from some one of you this evening, tell Ann if she is well enough I beg she will write to me, she is a letter in my debt, and I w[oul]d be glad she w[oul]d get out of it. This letter is intended for Mama, Ann and yourself.

I sent this day by Mr. McLane a little box with three tongues in it and as many Cain Apples as it w[oul]d hold, put them in a trunk or drawer for a few days, and let them mellow, before Aunt &c taste them.

You know there are none in Pennyslvania. These are very ordinary only what were left of making pyes. I had not time to wait till better were got. Give my love to mama, Ann, Aunt, Miss B., etc. and do write, and particularly, tis very lonesome here. If you do not get the tongues before you

receive this you had better send to Mr. McLane's about them. Today Polly Bracco came here to know if Mama w[oul]d hire her. She said she sh[oul]d have come last fall when Mama sent to her but cou[l]d not get places for her children. The youngest she w[oul]d *wish* to keep with her, but if Mama objects to it will board it out, provided she can afford to do it from her wages. She begs to know whether Mama will take her, and on what terms. She is to call Saturday next for an answer, pray write at once, and also tell me whether Mama is indebted to Leah, how much, and when her month will be up. Sally went in debt 42/6 at Harrisons, in Mama's name. Polly Bracco's child is five years old, a girl, for two she has good places. Thomas ran away, in debt to half a doz[e]n people. Dan Mifflin met him going and took his fine new clothes from him, with twelve and a half dollars which was the last of his money. He owed Mifflin ten pounds from him he got the cloth for his *new suit.*

[*Addressed to* Miss Ridgely
Care of P. Bond Esquire
Chestnut Street
Philadelphia]

In the next letter, addressed to Willy in the care of Mr. Phineas Bond, Mary mentions a marriage which was to have taken place at "Shee's." Thomas Parke, who built the Ridgely house on the Green in 1728, had a daughter who married a Mr. Shee and lived, in 1805, across the road from the Episcopal Church and the old Bradford box-wood garden. This house stands today on the northwest corner of State and Water Streets. We have no knowledge of Cowarden and "Miss Smack."

"Aunt Bond's" intense relief at hearing from her daughter is easy to appreciate. Two years earlier the Erskines had gone to England, leaving their little daughter Fanny with her grandmother. Some weeks before Mary wrote, "Mrs. Cad" had started for England to take the child back to her parents, and to make her own home near them. The word Mrs. Bond had just received told of their safe arrival, a matter not always to be taken for granted in an ocean passage in 1805.

The letter also tells of the Claytons having gone off to Bohemia;

this evidently refers to Bohemia Manor on the Bohemia River in Maryland. The letter expresses Mary's admiration and affection for her brother Henry's little boy, Charles George. It is interesting to note that, so long ago as the beginning of the nineteenth century, Eden Hill Farm was boasting of the perfection of the peaches from its orchards, as indeed it does today.

Dover August 23d. 1805. Friday morning

I wish my dear Willy, Mama had informed me respecting her Duck Creek Farm, as tomorrow the young men were to come down for an answer. If Mama will read over my letter she will find several questions I asked unanswered yet, and tomorrow also I suppose Polly Bracco will come for an answer. Pray always tell me what is to be done when I ask.

This Evening I hope to have the pleasure of hearing Ann is better and the rest of your circle well. I have no doubt Aunt feels fifty pounds the better for hearing from Mrs. Cadwalader . . . My sweet Boy is well and daily improving in every way, he walks quite alone, gets the pillow out of his cradle and drops it at my feet, he then lays his dear head on it, looks up at me and laughs, he stretches and rocks on the floor to frighten me, and when I pretend to cry, run's and pull's my hands off my face to kiss me—to sum up all he is perfection, and I confess, my dear Idol, my treasure. He is afraid of nothing, and nothing delights him so much as to set him on a horse. The other day all the sheep came in the lane. I carried him where they were while I had salt given to them and he w[oul]d get down to let them lick some from his blessed little hands. Such a child I never yet saw—my pen w[oul]d never weary writing of him, but as *you are not me*, I know you will be tired of reading; tell Ann he has *her passion* for *cats* and often feeds Miss Ann.

Mrs. McKee, Betsey, and Betsey Alston came last night. Charity is still at Salem. I imagine she will not leave it shortly. She is more attach'd to it than ever, or rather let me say to *one* of its inhabitants.

Cowarden and *Miss Smack* were to have been married last night, every thing was prepared, and he had taken his house. But his Uncle got to hear it, and instantly put an end to it; for *him* it was the best thing that could be done, but cruel as it respected the Girl. They were to have been married at Shee's; he can have no spirit, or any affection for her, if, after things had

gone thus far, he could suffer any body to prevent his marrying her, if he had loved her, tis a mortification he never would have permitted her to have known. Thank Miss Bond for her letter, and do some one of you write by every mail. Kent is perfectly healthy, but all the people seem determined to try and *get* sick by leaving it. Mrs. Bellach you know went for her health, she has lost her mother and both her children are ill. Bellach went off to keep well and got sick he is now at home very ill. His wife is in Wilmington. Claytons family are all gone off to Bohemia. And would you believe it Hall went off on yesterday morning, he has gone to New Castle, from there *I believe* to Lancaster, I have twice met him by our gate, but he has never been up to the house. He asked Dr. Horsey the other day, where he sh[oul]d go to *eat melons*. Horsey told him to come and see me, and he'd engage for his getting plenty, he said he w[oul]d then, and sh[oul]d tell me as soon as he came that it was *only for melons*, he might have saved himself the trouble as I sh[oul]d have known that, but he never came, I suppose he will stay some time.

George sends a kiss a piece to you *all*. Present me affectionately to Mama, Ann, Aunt, Miss B., etc. and when they write to Mrs. C and Fanny, my love to them. What did Fanny think of her Daughter?

I wish I could send you some of our fine peaches, melons &c. I know Pennsylvania can't boast such peaches. Tell Ann I am rejoiced she stands up for Kent—tis more than I expected, I thought she had quarrelled with it some time since. I confess I w[oul]d rather live in it than in any part of Philadelphia—I have got rid of all regard for that place.

Mrs. Sykes has been *visiting her neighbours these ten days*, she has been to see Sally, and all over town in fact, and last week dined at the head of her table with a party of gentlemen—her child will be a month old on Sunday next. She is a *brisk old woman*—if *Miss Anna Matilda is as brisk, oh! the happy man that becomes her help mate*. The D[octo]r takes the two older *angels* to Easton in a few day's—what a blessing to the neighborhood. It ought to be a day of general rejoicing. This economical pair have brought all their melons on the Green to sell, if money is to be made by *meaness*—God knows they will have it. The heat is really [unbearable] now. . . I shall be sadly disappointed if I do not hear from you to night. I hope the tongues were received long since, do tell me. Tell Mama her string and lima beans are now in perfection; I wish I could send you a mess every day, you know I never eat string beans.

Adieu, I am tired to death of writing besides I am going to preserve Damsons.

Yours affectionately
M. R.

Green came and brought me nine dollars which I now enclose. I hope soon to send you more, and Mama too. I am in haste. Harry's family are coming out.

[*Addressed to* Miss Ridgely
care of P. Bond Esquire
Chestnut Street
Philadelphia]

Mary's next letter describes the distressing illness of a firm friend of the family, Dr. Horsey. We have no record of the progress of Dr. Horsey's disease, but believe that it terminated his life shortly after this. One gathers from Mary's letters that she had a real attachment for him and that his death was a blow.

Dover, Tuesday August 27th 1805.

I was so disappointed my dear Mama at not hearing from you last night, that I scarcely know how to contain myself. I am really wretched at it, yet I try to hope that my disappointment was caused by some omission in the post office, and by nothing more, do pray, some of you write by every mail. I am so anxious that I cannot bear the idea of being neglected. I amuse myself all I can by looking after the Farm &c., &c., and with my sweet Boy, he now *runs* for he takes after "Aunt Willy" in *briskness* of foot, the moment he begins to crawl, I say to him get up you lazy Boy and walk! he jumps up and runs, indeed tis almost impossible to keep him off his feet and he has to be constantly watch'd, for fear of his falling, he is all life, to day he is in town and I should be at a great loss, had I not been measuring up, and sending the corn down to the Landing, the money for which I hope to enclose you. Harry was here yesterday he is getting in fine health again. Indeed all your friends are well—unless you will admit Dr. Horsey to be one, his situation is a most distressing one when we recollect the complaint so fatal to his family. On Thursday night he was here till very late, and altho he had been excessively worried with attending John Bellach, I never saw him appear in better health, and spirits. The next afternoon while at Bel-

lach's he was taken with a *hemorrhage of the lungs*. Sykes was instantly sent for, after much trouble the bleeding was stop[pe]d—but he was in such a situation as to render a removal impossible, until the next even[in]g when he was brought to town, he has never yet been able to walk to his lodgings, near as it is. Harry is with him as much as possible all day, and John Wild stays all night with him. Yesterday for the first of his being out, he rode as far as this, but was unable to drive himself or get in or out of the carriage without assistance, he has every appearance of a person in extreme ill health, complains very much of his heart has fever and bad cough, his spirits are very much hurt, nor can it be wondered at—all his friends must feel sincerely grieved—and did I not know that the Dr. was not one of your favorites, my dear mama, I sh[oul]d not have mentioned it, but had you seen him last even[in]g as I did you would have felt *(not as I did)* but—indeed, compassion. I will no longer dwell on a disagreeable theme, but cheer my spirit, with the blessed hope of letters from you tomorrow, to make one rejoice at the arrival of the mail, for I will trust in Heaven that they will tell me you are all better. Give a great deal of love to Ann, tell her I wish so much to see her that I should be tempted had I an opportunity, to leave all, for a few days here, to spend one day there, tis all I wish, but indeed I do wish for that extremely, but I know tis not possible. I see no human being but Harry's family and Horsey, but amidst everything I remember the *old song of the miller*.

I know you will not be displeased to hear your family all go on very well. The servants behave well—Dover and Jim, I think particularly careful, and attentive to looking around the fields, keeping the stock on the Farm &c, Dover has not been a night from home, I always send him to the mail and he always returns as soon as possible—and by light in the morn[in]g I hear them all moving about. Peet too is always at home before sunrise. I had like to have forgotten to tell you, James Ayres has rented the Roland Farm, and sent a man here yesterday, of the name of John Saxton to rent yours—Ayres' wife I find refuses to go up there, and I suppose also the Quakers got him for Roland. Harry says if he was you he w[oul]d take the *Concielers*, they are the men Mr. Killen said were the only honest Tenants he ever had, however you can determine for yourself when you get home. Tell Willy I saw Wilkinson and *dunn'd* him yesterday he promised to bring me the money this week. I enclosed his nine Dol[lars] by Saturdays mail. Have you got the tongues? I shall leave my letter to finish tomorrow, but

let me *now* beg you to write for heaven sake by every mail. Give my love to the girls.

28th.. I have waited till I fear I am too late for the mail, and my messenger has not returned from Camden yet—and [lest you] be uneasy will send my letter, but let me beg and beseech of you not to let a mail pass with out my hearing from you.

My dear Boy is well and as fat as a little Bacon hog—he is *now* my only comforter, and blessing—may he continue a blessing to all his friends. I don't know what I w[oul]d not give to be one day with you and the girls—but I dare not dream of it. Harry &c are well they were here today.

With sincere love and the best wishes of such a being as myself, I am my dear

Mama

Your sincerely affectionate

M. R.

Horsey is better

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
care of P. Bond Esquire
Chestnut Street
Philadelphia]

In the letter of August 30th another marriage is mentioned, that of Dr. Fisher and Sally Loockerman. This Dr. Fisher was related to John Fisher, the federal judge, who lived at the southwest corner of the Dover Green. The old Loockerman house still stands on the corner of State and Water Streets, with its fine boxwood garden stretching to Church Square. There is an allusion to the lack of intimacy between the Ridgelys at Eden Hill and Dr. Abraham Ridgely's family. This had begun about 1798 over a financial misunderstanding. The quarrel, which was in time reconciled, was the only serious or long-continued break in the warm friendship between Dr. Charles Ridgely's widow and the two groups of his children.

The coolness between herself and Nicholas that Mary here implies was not a lasting one. At this time Abraham Ridgely lived in Smyrna, some twelve miles north of Dover, and Nicholas between that village and Dover.

Dover, Friday, August 30 . . 1805

I am astonished to find by your last letter my dear Willy that you have heard only twice from me, I have never omitted writing by every mail, one alone excepted, and that was last Tuesday's, by Thursday's mail I wrote to Mama. I shall enclose to you, one hundred dollars, which I beg you will give to Mama, tis what I got for the old wheat and corn—as also five dollar's and twenty eight cents more, that, as tis in change I cannot enclose. I sold it to Mifflin who behaved as he always does on such occasions, and sent me three pence a bushel more than he agreed to give. And sent me the money the moment the grain was delivered. I have been trying to get some body to make up the Peaches on shares, but fear I shall not succeed . . if our own tenants had time they should do it, but they have not, as they must attend to the fodder . . I cannot get a hand to manage . . but I am quite a *farmer* and keep fine order here—but I would as soon be buried alive as content to *live* on a Farm—six months on one w[oul]d finish me.

You are mistaken if you think I feast on fruit, I have not eaten six peaches, or a Melon since I have been here, there is nothing under Heaven I believe that I could *feast* on, the best food on Earth I have no appetite for, and my coffee in the morning is my living, and sustenance for the day. I wish you had some of the Peaches indeed they are the finest I ever saw. You ask me for news, I have heard none (for I see no body to hear it from) except that Dr. Fisher and Sally Loockerman are going to be married, the Dr. often visits Wilmington, tis said his visits are to Miss L.

You cou[l]d as soon send your love, *by me to Fanny Erskine in England*, as to any of Dr. Ridgely's family, you know I never see them. Mrs. R—has been two day's in town, but did not condescend to come near me. The Chancellor came down and carried *Miss Bell* up to stay with Miss Brereton while he went to New Castle Court—she is still there, as he has not come home. I have never seen him. You know I am quite an *independent* mortal, and above such *little souls*, and all their meanness, it never hurts me—from those I love and esteem I receive every mark of goodness and attention, of tender kindness, and the slights and ill conduct of others shall never make me heave a sigh, unless indeed, in pity for their folly. I have been particularly lonesome lately, but as I c[oul]d not see the friends I wish'd I cared for none. You ask me if Mrs. Harper has not been to see me. Wednesday she sent Sally word she would drink tea with her, but as Sally was en-

gaged, and Harper was going to ride above here she rode as far as this with him, and staid about an hour and a half, I had coffee got at once, as it was time, and they then went. Mama's Geranium grows beautifully, and her Rose of Oteheite is in full bloom but my poor roses have all died since I left them. My Bird is well, Harry takes charge of it. I wanted to have it out, but he wish'd it there, and as there are so many cats here I thought there might be danger. Leah left me Tuesday week. Rachel was sick and I had to take Peggy who is very fond of the child, and he of her, to nurse him, Leah positively refused to milk, and as I was determined to be obey'd and to keep an orderly set about the house, I told her if she did not do as I bid her she sh[oul]d not stay. She went and the next day went *to Harry* for her wages—she w[oul]d not ask me for them. He did not pay her, as he did not know what was due her. She say's six dollars. I am so anxious to hear from you all, to night that I don't know what to do. Your last letter made me more unhappy than I was, and that was indeed needless—for I never yet was so much so. It now seems as if I c[oul]d turn no where but I met distress, and from every quarter. You seem to think I am enjoying myself in health and spirits. I never expect either again in this life—and altho my health is no worse than it has long been, it is certainly no better & I am really hurt at your supposing I have anything of an *agreeable* nature to *feast on*—at least that I c[oul]d enjoy any thing. We have had no rain since you left home until Wednesday, that day and yesterday we had very refreshing and plentiful rain. God grant it reach'd you, and has been of service. Everything here looks fresh and lively to what it did.

Give my love to Mama and Ann, to Aunt &c. I wish to God I was with you. Your saying you have not heard from home but twice makes me almost fear to enclose the money—but as we have never yet lost any, I suppose I may venture.

Adieu and believe me with affection
Y[ou]rs M.R.

Mrs. McKee and Betsey went home this morning. George is a very charming boy, and sends a score of kisses to his G[rand] Mama and Aunt's.

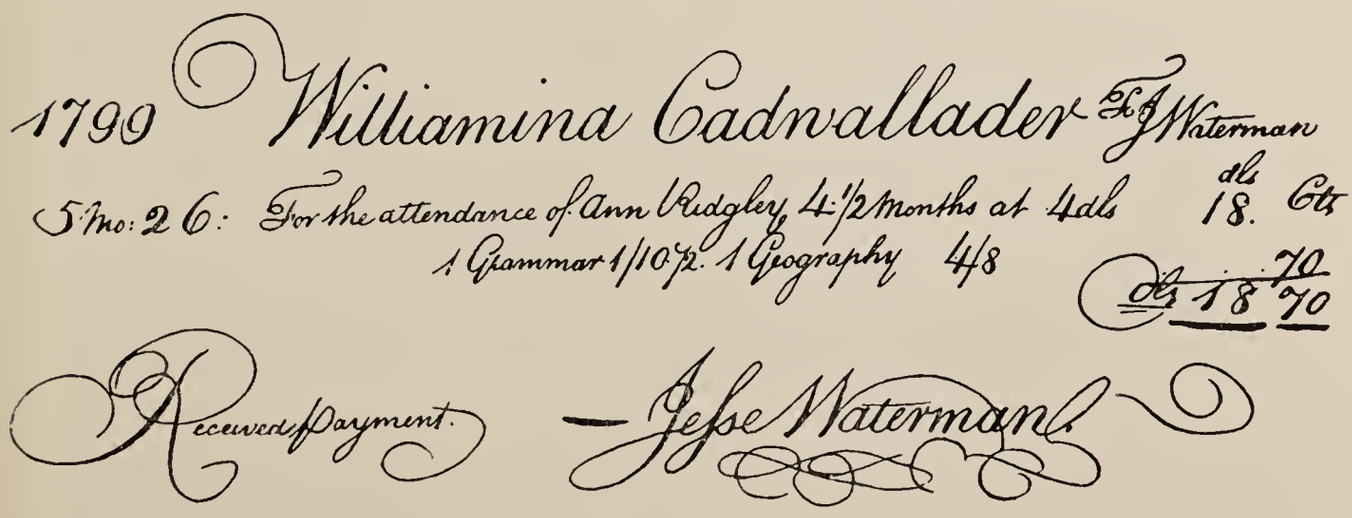
[*Addressed to* Miss Ridgely
To the care of P. Bond Esquire
Chestnut Street
Philadelphia]

Ann Ridgely
1784–1805

Ann, the youngest daughter of Charles and Ann Ridgely, was born on February 12th, 1784. A few of her early letters, written before 1799, are among those which precede this section dedicated to her. In January of the last year of the century, she started her school days in Philadelphia under the care of Mrs. Cadwalader, her cousin. As we have read in the letter from Mrs. Cadwalader to Ann's mother, that lady disapproved of boarding schools for young ladies. She highly recommended Ann's being under the care of Mrs. Rowan, who lived in Harmony Court, near Carpenters' Hall. Harmony Court must have resounded to the strains of music most of the day, for Quesnets' dancing school, where classes were held both morning and afternoon, was situated here. There were also practice Balls held at Quesnets' in the mornings.

Next door to this attractive spot was Mrs. Rowan's house, where several young ladies lived. They were visited by Jesse Waterman, who taught less alluring subjects than dancing, and by teachers of drawing, tambour, and other styles of needle work, and, in short, all the fashionable accomplishments considered proper for young ladies of that day.

Ann found it absolutely necessary to devote three mornings a week to dancing, and Jesse Waterman's drier subjects were sometimes interrupted by shopping excursions, parties and visits to the play.


1799 Williamina Cadwallader Jesse Waterman
5 Mo: 26: For the attendance of Ann Ridgley 4½ Months at 4 dls 18. 6 cts
1 Grammar 1/10½. 1 Geography 4/8
dls 18 70
Received Payment. — Jesse Waterman

Many of her mother's old friends or relatives, her aunt Mrs. Phineas Bond, her cousins the Cadwaladers, the Travises and Blodgets, claimed much of her time, as did other kinsmen and old friends, the Hamiltons, the Bayards, and the Dickinsons. The Vinings and Wynkoops were family connections frequently mentioned.

Ann's letters so intimately reflect her way of life while at Mrs. Rowan's, it is perhaps unnecessary to preface them with further explanations.

Jan[ua]ry 20–'99 Philadelphia

My Dear Mother

We arrived at Mrs. Cadwalader's at half past five, and staid till nine, when Harry and myself, with Polly and James went [to] Mrs. Rowan's, who appears to be very clever. this morning Mrs. Cad. sent for me, just as I had begun a letter to you giving you an account of our journey, and beg[ge]d I would come to her house and go with her to her mothers, indeed if I had have written to you from Harmony Court I fear you could not have read the letter, for I never saw such pens. I have a charming little room to myself next Mrs. Gore's we leave the door open at night. Mrs. G. is very kind to me and desires compliments to you. I hope you will excuse a short letter as I must dress before I go to Aunt Bonds. Becky Bond & Fanny Cad. have just return'd from church. I did not go as it is a bad damp day. Last night Erskin and young McDonald were here. I think McDonald the greatest fool I ever saw. this morning Tom Meredeth and William Blodget were here. I think them both much alter'd, Tom for the better & William for the worse. I have not seen any of your friends yet but those mention'd. Harry was here since I came.

Young Strawbridge came from Wilmington with us, he's very clever. I believe Harry dines with him today at the Tavern. Mrs. Vinings family are all well. Both Miss Wynkoops' and Miss George were there. in my next I will write fully. At present you must excuse me. I think Fanny and Sally both pretty. Adieu my Dear Mother & believe me your dutiful and Affectionate

A Ridgely

Mrs. Cadwalader begs you will excuse her not writing today. I shall write to you and George by Harry. Remember [me] to the girls and Jane.

Mrs. Bayard is to be up this even[in]g or tomorrow.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Near Dover
Delaware]

"Fanny" was Fanny Cadwalader. "Sally" was Sally Goldsborough, a granddaughter of William Smith and his wife Williamina (Moore) Smith, who had died when the girl was a small child. Mrs. "Cad" invited her to live with her.

Philadelphia Jan[ua]ry 24, 1799

My Dear and Honor'd Mother

As I expect Harry from Lancaster this evening I now set down to write to you as I promis'd in my letter of Sunday last, which I hope you got on Tuesday. Sunday I din'd at Aunt Bond's where I saw Louis Morris Naylor, Richard Smith, Erskine and Mrs. Travis Mrs. Cadwalader and her children. Sunday morn[in]g Fanny C. went with me to see the Hamilton's, but they were at dinner, and we did not see them. in the even[in]g I went in to Blodget's, Mrs. B. is lying in. She has five of the finest & prettyest children, I ever saw, her youngest is almost a month old, her oldest is, Thomas Smith. 2. George Washington 3 Julia Rush. 4. Ellen & 5 John Adams. When I was coming out, I went in the nursery to see the children, who were in bed, they all call'd me to come and kiss them & I had to climb over two or three beds to get to them. the day before yesterday, Jane Rowan and myself went up to Mrs. Cad's to see about some work for me, when as we were going out of the door, I saw Becky Hamilton on their porch. Fanny call'd her and she beg[ge]d me to go in with her. I saw all the girls, James H. and Mary Lyle, who is indeed a sweet little creature, they all seem'd in very low spirits, but beg[ge]d I would be very sociable. Mrs. Rowan moves out of town in May or June, so pray send for me in May at any rate. I long to see you all, I can think of nothing but home, and my dear friends there. I don't very much admire Mrs. R.—her manners are very disagreeable to me. She is kind enough to me, but behaves very ill to her other boarders, her daughters I like very much, they are good natur'd & clever. She has nothing to do with me, her daughters names are, Nancy she is married, Isabella, Martha and Jane Bell, Patty and Jane are pretty,

but Mrs. Weed (Nancy) is the image of her mother, who is no beauty. the two girls who live here are from Santa Cruse, their names Mary and Janet Parsons, they are both good natur'd and funny, and almost as fat as Polly Stanton and not so tall as me. I went to dancing school on Monday there I saw, Elisa Smith, but as we did not know each other, we pas't without speaking. Yesterday she came up to me shook hands & set by me. I am going to church with Becky Hamilton on Sunday if it is fit weather, but it is snowing very fast now. I wish I was to return with Harry for I am quite homesick already. Jesse Waterman has not been here yet but is to come today. I am writing in the school room, where there is nothing but smoke and noise. My own room is too cold to write in, it's a pretty little place, with two windows, two chairs, a card table, looking glass and bed in it. the door opens in Mrs. Gore's chamber, & we leave that door open at night. Mrs. G. is kind & clever to me, but it's not like home. I send Willy and Mary 2 yards of fashionable ribbon, they have ribbons now with two hearts and Adams between. I have not seen any of them yet.

I believe now my Dear Mother, I have told [you] all the news I know. I will therefore bid you adieu with the hope of soon seeing you. Pray write very soon & long.

Believe me my Beloved Mother
your dutiful and affectionate
A Ridgely

Give my love to George, the girls & Jane.
Tell them they must write to me.
AR

I shall not seal this [till] Harry comes, its dreadfully written, but remember the pens.

24th. January 1799

My dear Child

Before this time you have rec[eive]d my letter of Sunday last, and my chief motive for writing again so soon, is to tell you that I rec[eive]d yours on Tuesday even[in]g, and am glad to find you appear pleas'd with your lodging. Your sleeping in a room by yourself must have been, I fear, rather a disagreeable circumstance to you at first, but I hope you are before now perfectly reconcil'd to it. Mrs. Gore's extreme kindness, in leaving open

the door between her chambers and yours, I shall never cease to remember with gratitude—but, my dear girl, when the weather is very cold, you must not expect this; probably Mrs. G's health might be injured by continuing to leave her door open on this sudden change of weather, and I am very sure you are above any foolish, childish fears, and that you will be as well satisfied to have it shut, provided Mrs. Gore will be so good as to leave it unlock'd. I must confess my self not a little surprised by finding, from your letter, that Mrs. Cadwalader suffer'd you and your Brother, both entire strangers to the City, to leave her House accompanied only by her Servants. But—I am a plain country woman, and know little of modern politeness—possibly such conduct may be thought quite genteel, and proper, by the *fashionable people* of Philad[elphi]a but I am very sure, it would, by the rustic inhabitants of poor little Dover, have been thought not only rude, but unkind. And let me intreat you, from this time to remember that both your parents, (tho' unfortunately for you, you knew not your beloved father) valued the poor peasant who possess'd the "milk of human kindness" more than they would have done the richest Noble who possess'd it not.

You know it has been a rule with me to communicate to my Children my opinion on all occasions, & therefore, I have said what I thought respecting Mrs. C's behaviour on your first arrival, but let me desire you will take no notice of it hereafter. Remember it only as disapprov'd by me, and that alone (if the goodness of your own heart was not sufficient) will prevent you from ever behaving in the like unkind manner to any body.

Your strict attention to improving yourself in fine work, reading, writing, Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, drawing, painting, and dancing, will take up your time so entirely, that it will not be in your power to go out of the house often, except to the Dancing School, and to Church on Sundays, and this I earnestly hope you will never omit doing when you are well, and the weather will admit of your going. I am sorry you forgot your Umbrella—if I sh[oul]d hear of any body going up in the Stage that I know, I will try to send it. I shall anxiously wish for Harry's return, at which time I expect to receive a long letter from you. I hope you will not again complain of bad pens. Buy yourself good quills, and, to be sure, Mr. Waterman, as he teaches you to write, will make good ones for you for his own cred[i]t. If you will but accustom yourself to rise now, as early as you did

at home, you may certainly write to me a letter ev'ry Sunday morn[in]g before Mrs. Rowan's breakfast time.

Your sister Willy begs you will send her, by y[ou]r Brother, if you can get them in time, two hair combs, like y[ou]r sister Mary's. They are, Mary says, easily met with. Tell Harry to pay you whatever they may cost—and remember not to let him forget to give you the money I directed him to leave with you. Have you got a new dress yet? I hope you have, and that Betsey Carson made it.

You have before now, no doubt, seen all your relations—tell me in your next how they all do. Is Mrs. Blodget confin'd yet? Mrs. C. wrote me some time ago that she soon expected to be. Say for me affectionately to all fr[ien]ds especially your Aunt Bond, when you next see her.

I hope Mrs. Cadwalader has got a piece of linnen ready to come down by Harry, as I really [must] supply you, as soon as possible, with such parts of dress as you at present most want.

Present my most respectful compliments to Mrs. Gore. I shall love her as long as I live for her kindness to you, my beloved child. Mrs. Vinings two Brothers, James & Henry, are now on a visit to her, 'tis s[ai]d Mr. J. Seton intends taking Seton V. home with him. Mr. and Mrs. Jones & William were here on Sunday. William is, I think, one of the finest little creatures I ever saw—he was more *funny* and good temper'd than I ever saw him before.

Everybody here desire love and best wishes to you.

Heaven bless you my very dear Child!

Your ever affectionate mother

A. Ridgely

Write me the N[umber] of Mrs. Rowan's house.

[*Addressed to* Miss A. Ridgely
at Mrs. Rowan's
Harmony Court
Philadelphia]

Sunday Morn[in]g Feb[ruar]y 3 '99 Philadelphia

Your first letter My Dear Mother of 20th of January, Harry took out of the Postoffice the day before he left here, but after I had seal'd my letter,

your second of the 24. the penny post bro[ugh]t on Monday last. Sunday I spent the day at Hamiltons where I saw Lyle and his children. He is in very good spirits. Andrew Hamilton and Joseph MacDaniel, are more alike than any two people I ever saw.

Yesterday morning Becky H— came down for me to go there, to dine and spend the day again & see the funeral of Mr. Hughes, which was the most ill manag'd thing I ever heard of. Sunday afternoon Becky Hamilton and me went to church, where we had the *honor* of seeing the President's Son, who has just return'd from his *travels*. Yesterday as I was going to Hamiltons I met White who I was very glad to see, he said he saw you a few days before, and that you were all well, when he returns I shall write you a long letter if I can make one out. I suppose you saw Mrs. Baches remarks on John Adams Blodget. She said he'd much better have been call'd Washington Lottery Blodget. Apropose the mannagers have drawn the highest prise. Sam Murgatroyd is to be married very soon to Susan Governure. She is now in Phila[delphia.] Monday evening Aunt Bond sent for me to go up and drink tea with them, just before tea Dick Smith came in. Mrs. Pauling has mov'd to town and advertises board & lodging in Callowhill Street. The combs you wrote for I will send by White, as I did not get your letter till Harry was gone. I hope there's a letter for me in the Post Office, if White has none.

I shall be quite offended with George if he has not written. Tell Harry and the Girls to write to me. Everybody I meet with is kind and clever, my fingers are almost frose. I must now quit writing. Prime is indeed a fright. tomorrow the plays begin. Adieu my dear Mother, believe me your dutiful & affectionate

A Ridgely

I fear you will not be able to read this, but the ink is dreadful. Today I dine at Mrs. Cad's.

My opinion of this family is much alter'd since I wrote last. I think them very clever & agreeable.

When White goes home I'll send you 2 or 3 songs I like.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. A. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

In the foregoing letter Ann speaks of the Hamilton family of "Woodlands," whose parents had been Andrew Hamilton and Abigail Franks, the latter a kinswoman of Mrs. Ridgely and granddaughter of John Moore of New York. Mr. Lyle was the husband of a deceased Hamilton sister, whose two small children were living with the Hamiltons.

Saturday Morn[in]g. February 9, 1799
Philadelphia

My dear Mother

Yours of the 29 of January and 3 of February, came duely to hand. I'm sorry Harry got overset in going home, and bless my stars I was not of the party. I am now perfectly satisfied with my situation, and do not wish to change it. Jesse Waterman comes every evening except Saturday, that and Sunday I have to myself. The Hamiltons gave me an invitation to spend every Saturday with them, today I am to spend with Aunt Bond. She has had a cold, but is now well enough to go out. last Sunday she din'd at Mrs. Cadwalader's. So did I. You know how I used to rave against family parties. I still hate them, but I prefere them to staying at home alone, as all the family go out on Sunday. Mrs. Bayard and Miss Bassett are in Philadelphia, they live in the Hamilton's house.

Eliza Smith has just sent an invitation for me to spend Monday evening with her, but as I go out today and tomorrow, *I must not go.*

I don't know whether White's gone home or not, he said he should certainly call on me before he went, but he never has, it rain'd so this morning I could not get out to buy the combs for Willy, so I fear she will be oblig'd to wait a while longer. I have got two dresses, a pink and white chintz, and a handsom white japan'd muslin, but they are not either made up yet. Betsy Carson has not had time. Adieu till tomorrow.

Sunday Morn[in]g: Yesterday Sally Goldsborough and me spent the day with Aunt Bond, who was to be alone, as Mr. B. and Becky din'd out. today Becky Hamilton goes to church with me. After church it's possible we may call on Mrs. Bayard. I dine at Hamilton's to day, they are as kind as they can be. Thursday La Cave cut my hair and show'd me how to dress it; there's a little cut at my neck which curls, my long hair is turn'd up tight, and hangs down to meet the short hair, and looks like a wig, it's also curl'd before. Last evening I call'd for a few minute's on Mrs. Blodget who is very unwell. She desired a great deal of love to you, and Aunt B. sends

love, Mrs. Gore and Mrs. Rowan compliments. every body I see that knows you says I'm your image. the moment Mrs. Cadwalader saw me she said "what a thin girl", she had expected to see a *monster*. I send you two songs that I like very much. tell Harry, George, Willy and Mary, I'm quite offended with them for not writing to me, I expected as I was the only one from home, that they would favour me with letters every now & then. last fall Mrs. Cochran (Nelly Berkley) broke a blood vessel, and it is suppos'd she will not live long.

Adieu my dear Mother, I have been setting these three minutes to recollect what I could say more, but I have exhausted my fund of news for this time.

Believe me my dear Mother your dutiful and affectionate

A Ridgely

Give my love to all who think it worth their while to ask for me. Kiss William Jones for me, take care of Louis and Sophia. I suppose Gilbert walks quite sturdy by this time. Tuesday I suppose you will toss off a bumper to me.

"Louis" and "Sophia" were cats, Ann's beloved pets, and "Gilbert," a negro toddler at Eden Hill. "Tuesday" was to be Ann's fifteenth birthday.

Sunday morn[in]g Philad[elph]ia Feb[ruar]y 17 1799

My dear Mother

In your last letter of the 10th Ins[tan]t you desire to know what I have been about, since I have been here. Jesse Waterman attends me every evening, Saturday excepted. I have a small piece of muslin in the frame on which I have learn't to tambour, and I go to Dancing School every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. I have done nothing else yet, but as soon as I have done the muslin I'm about, I shall begin whatever you chuse me to do. As to Drawing and Painting, I have so many other things to attend to, I don't think it's worth while to attempt it, but if you chuse I should, write to Mrs. Cadwalader about it. You may be assured of my striving to improve myself in every branch of education that I undertake. I hope when you meet me you may not be disappointed, you shall not if I can help it.

I am much obliged to Willy for her trouble in making up my linnen. When I go to the play it will be with Becky Bond. She is to send for me the first good play that's acted. today Mrs. Travis sent to know if I would dine with her, that Becky Bond would come in the carriage for me. It has been snowing all night [and] all the morning. last Monday I was at a dance at Judge Smith's; he and Mrs. S. behaved very kind and begged I would be very sociable with the girls: he made many kind enquiries after you, and asked when you talked of visiting Philadelphia. Monday morn[in]g the two Miss Wynkoops came here to see me, but I was in Dancing School, so they both went in there, and gave me an invitation to spend Saturday with them but I could not, then they begged me to spend next Saturday afternoon with them. Thursday night Mrs. Rowan, the Miss Pearsons and myself went to a Practising Ball next door at Quesnets, where I danced two Country Dances. this day week I spend at Hamiltons, who desire love etc. Molly keeps Lyle's house, the children are so fond of her they are always with her and call her *Mammy*.

I saw White on Sunday in the street dres't in full uniform, and he really looks like *Captain Strut:* to day I will speak to Mrs. Cadwalader about the wax candles you mention. I pity poor Jane, pray give my love to her. I hope if she passes through this place before I leave it I shall see her.

Miss Ashley was married to Walker twice, in the morning by the Bishop, and the next evening by a Roman priest.

Adieu my dear Mother, give my love to all friends, and believe me your truely affectionate and dutiful

A. Ridgely

Mrs. G. Mrs. R. etc. send compliments.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

Ann's sorrow for "Jane" was occasioned by the fact that Jane's husband, Jacob Jones, had recently entered the navy and was soon to go to sea. Later he was placed under Bainbridge's command in the expedition against the pirates of Tripoli. A section of this book is devoted to Jane and Jacob Jones.

Philadelphia, Feb. 24, 1799

My dear Mother

Yours of the 14, and 17, came to hand on Wednesday: Yesterday I went to Hamiltons, and Molly and myself went all over the City to get the things you wrote for, but could not get any book muslin at a lower price than seventeen and sixpence, that we thought would do, and we got it. I hope you will not be displeas'd at my giving that price, as I did not know what you wanted it for. Crape muslin could not be met with for less than a dollar and half p[e]r yard, so I did not get any. The combs I have not yet purchased, as I can't get any under a dollar. Mrs. Cadwalader says she can get them at half a dollar, so shall I let her? I did not see any of Goldsmiths *Traveller* but will look out for one. Yesterday I saw Louis Morris who desires his respects to Mary. Becky Bond and Fanny Cadwalader were at the Ball, in honor of Gen. Washington at the Circus on Friday. The roof was off and every body look'd blue with the cold. Yesterday I drank Tea with the Miss Wynkoops who are very clever and kind. Eliza W. went with me to the corner of Third and Walnut Streets to see Mrs. Bayard, but she had mov'd, and lives in Walnut Street, so I did not see her. I ask'd Mrs. Cad. the price of the wax candles, as you desired. They are four and sixpence a pound by the box. Maria West has a daughter of a week or ten days old, which she calls Mary. it was said some time since, the fever was here, but I do not believe it, as the Doctors say it is not. Aunt Bond etc etc desire love; my chintz and muslin are both made up in the new fashion, which is very long waisted. I will send you the length of my pink one. it is a very handsom chintz as fine as my old one, at four and eight pence p[e]r yard. Adieu my dear Mother, believe me your ever dutiful and affectionate

A Ridgely

I fear you will not be able to make this out, as the pen and paper are both so bad and my fingurss so cold. To day I dine at Mrs. Cads.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

Philadelphia, March, 9, 1799

My dear Mother

Yours of the 3d came safe to hand by Tuesdays mail. I pity poor Minty Meeks; I hope her uncle will not send her to the poor House. Last evening

Fanny Cadwalader came down to ask me to spend to day with them it has been raining all the morning, but now looks as if it would clear, if it does I shall go, as I have boots. Becky Bond, has had a very bad cold since the Ball at the Circus. The President was there, and stai'd the whole evening (or rather night) for the ladies did not go home till 1 or 2 o'clock. Some gentlemen stai'd till 6 in the morning. Tuesday it was reported that Sally M'Kean that was, had two fine sons, but it was not true, her sister Sophia goes to Dancing School and is a great favorite of mine. Sunday I spent at Hamiltons. Molly has a bad cold, but all the rest are well. Monday I was at a Practising Ball at Quesnets, where I saw the Miss Wynkoops, and Mrs. Smith and her daughters, tell Mary Maria Smith is a great belle. No young ladies wear powder in their hair. Adieu till to morrow.

Sunday morning.

Yesterday I din'd at Mrs. Cadwaladers, and drank tea at Hamiltons. They all desire love to you Etc. I wrote to Willy last Sunday, the letter and muslin went by Wells. I did not know he was going till Sunday morn[in]g and I don't know how Mrs. Cad put up the muslin. I sent it to her when I came home at night. Adieu my dear mother & believe me your dutiful & affectionate

A Ridgely

its almost time to go to church.
To day I go to Travis's.

Last night about 12 or 1 o'clock there was a dreadful cry of Fire. I have not yet heard where it was, but last night, it appear'd to be in Third Street.

Mrs. Gore, Mrs. Rowan, Etc. desire complim[en]ts.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

March 16. [17]99 Philadelphia

My dear Mother

Yours of 6 Inst[an]t came to hand on Wednesday morning. I am sorry Mr. Wells made a mistake about the muslin. I sent it to Mrs. Cadwalader the night before he left the City, and Erskine took it from there to Mr. W.

I did not direct it or seal it, as Hamiltons servant was waiting to take it to Mrs. C. Sunday I din'd at Travises & drank tea at Judge Smiths. Mrs. S. sent down in the morn[in]g to beg I would spend the day there but I was engaged. I saw the French Prisoners when they came from Lancaster on Sunday, poor creatures they did not look as if they were able to walk, but appeared in very good spirits as many of them were laughing. Yesterday I spent with the Hamiltons'. The Girls are but dull, as James & Andrew are going on Tuesday with the Army against the Insurgents they are in very high spirits about going. Yesterday I went into Dancing School to see Betsy Macomb, as she does not go the days I do. She was very clever, and we had a long *confab*, about Dover & its inhabitants. She told me Mrs. Collins had a daughter. Patty Macmullon has been in Philad[elph]ia but has gone home. I saw one of Claypools papers of the 3d of February, in it I saw the marriage of a Mr. Benjamin Noxon of Noxon Town to a Miss Martha Black of same place. I suppose its our cousin Ben Noxon? I got Willy a very pretty comb yesterday for a Dollar. Yesterday I saw John Ward Fenno, he's thought very handsom. I do not think the *very* ought to be added to the *handsom*, handsom he is, but thats all. I think Sam Murgatroyds face handsom, but his person shocking. I am very sorry to hear of Grace's conduct. I hope she will change it, as I should be very sorry not to find *all* the family at home when I return. There was a great fuss at Emily Rush's wedding. She had like to have fainted when she was married. Friday & Saturday she saw her young Company. Andrew Hamilton drank Tea there last night. Today I dine at Mrs. Cadwaladers.

Adieu my Dear Mother & Believe me your Dutiful and affectionate

A Ridgely

March 17, 1799, Mrs. G. and Mrs. R. sent [comp]liments.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

Philadelphia, March 31st 1799

My dear Mother

Yours of the 24. came duely to hand. I am glad to hear you are likely to have a good preacher among you, as it has been a great while since you have had one. Mr. Gardner's being an own Brother to "The Gallant Cap-

tain Gardener", is a sufficient reason why you should like him. Poor Mrs. Cochran, who died on Sunday last, has left a daughter of two weeks old, her Father and Husband were both almost crazy when she died. Pray be so good as to send me two or three fine roots of Tube Rose for Mrs. Gore, who has been as kind and attentive to me as a near relation could be. I think her one of the best women in the world. I have the pleasure of seeing myself the Favourite, not only of her, but of all the Family, this I suppose you will all think vanity, but as there is no body else to tell you so, I will do it myself. I wrote to Harry on Sunday, and am in expectation of a long letter from him on Tuesday. I shall write to Willy on Sunday. Tell her Miss Parsons knows nothing about any of her school mates, as she has been five years in Bethlehem. It at length begins to look like Spring. I hope it will not be long before some of your Neighbours will be up, as I should be glad of my linnen and my Umbrella as the sun is so warm in the Spring; if the girls want powder it can be got at eleven pence a pound by the dozen. Mrs. Gore, Mrs. Rowan Etc. send their compliments. I see Betsy Macomb every other day. She is very sociable and clever. Give my Love to the Girls, boys, Jane, and every body that ask for me. Adieu my dear Mother, believe me your truely affectionate and dutiful

A. Ridgely

When you see a word spelt wrong in my letters, be so good as to spell it right, and mark it, that I may know it.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

Philadelphia April 13, 1799

My dear Mother

Your letter and all the things came safe to hand by Mr. Battell. Mrs. Rowan sends you a thousand thanks for the Hams and Tongues which are very fine. Accept my most grateful acknowledgments for the linnen Tube Rose roots and pincushion. Friday I was out almost all day trying to get the things you & Willy wrote for. I have been fortunate enough to get them. The powder came to 12 shillings. Willys Shoes cost 15 shillings. Palmer says they w[oul]d be large enough for Mrs. Nixon. The thread cost 5 shillings. Carraway seed 11 pence. Mrs. Rundle has sent you an Antwerp

Raspberry, therefore I did not buy you one. I could have bo[ugh]t you a Moss Rose, but I didn't know how to send it to you. Mrs. Cadwalader in her letter to you, mention'd that I have had frosted heels which has prevented my attend[in]g Dancing School for 4 weeks, they are now well almost and Monday I shall again go in to Quesnets. Mr. Smith, who is th[ough]t the best painter in City, attends me three times a week at a dollar a lesson, he says I am as great a genius as he ever saw. I suppose he's like Willy and thinks a little flattery will do. Wednesday even[in]g Maria Bingham went with a Count Tilly an old French man, or at least forty years of age, to a Parson Jones and was married. She went to her fathers and as they thought went to bed, at one o'clock her maid let her out, at the bottom of the garden, Count Tilly met her with a carriage & took her to Miss Jones's where he lodged. She told the maid to tell her mamma in the morning she had been married the evening before and was with her husband, in the morning Richard Willing, Mrs. Jackson & Mrs. Francis went to Miss Jones's, where they found the bride in bed & the Count just risen. Richard Willing and he were disputing in the middle of the floor, Mrs. Francis fainting & the Countess squaling she would not go home till they told her if she did not go soon she would never see her mother alive, as she had taken a large dose of laudnum, she then consented to go, as they went home some person met the carriage, and seeing the blinds drawn up, asked what they had there, the servant replied a prise. Mr. & Mrs. Bingham are very much distress't, they will not see the Count, and wish to break the marriage, neither Maria or her husband will consent to it. He is the most worthless fellow in the world with out anything to recommend him, but a handsom face & person. I beg your acceptance of a Pocket Book of my work, and an orrange. You must excuse both as I'm much obliged to Mr. Dickinson and Maria, for their presents. Mr. D's I believe I shall never read, as [you know] I was never fond of *Catechisms* of any sort. I also send a little bit of muslin that I worked some time ago, it will perhaps do for a cap for some of the little strangers that so often make their appearance in the family. Is Rachel's child Abram alive yet? I send Cyrus a primer as I promis'd him. I believe I shall not write to Willy, to day, if I have time before Mr. B. goes I will. Adieu my dear Mother believe me your truely affect[io]nate & dutiful

A Ridgely

Mrs. Gore gave me some Ladys Slipper seed which are remarkably fine. Pray write me what Sister Ridgely calls her daughter.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware
Favour'd by Mr. Battell]

"Sister Ridgely" was Abraham Ridgely's wife, the baby, his daughter Margaretta, who died an infant. "Cyrus" was one of the house servants. Mr. Dickinson's spurned gift was *A Catechism of Nature*, a rather remarkable question-and-answer textbook of science, translated from the Dutch original. Its title was, it would appear, unhappily chosen.

Philadelphia, Saturday April 20. '99

My Dear Mother.

Your letter of the 14 Inst[ant] I received on Tuesday. I went that evening up to Mrs. Cadwaladers to get the money for Mrs. Rowan, but as I did not take the bill, and Mrs. C. didn't know the amount of it, I did not get it for her. She how ever went up the next day and got it, my quarter was up yesterday. I hope before this Mr. Battell is in Dover, this day week I wrote fully to you & Willy & sent my letters & Mrs. Cads. & the box. I sent all the things you wrote for, a Pocket Book of my own work, which you must excuse as it is the first I ever did of the kind. I intended to have made it up for you, but as Mr. B. said he was going home in 5 or 6 days I tho[ugh]t I had not time, leave it however till I return & I will do it. I sent you an orrange, which Aunt Bond sent to me when my foot was sore. I fear it's not much but a "short little's better than a longe none". Wednesday as George McCall was walking in his Father's garden he fell Dead, he had not been sick before, since his death it has been discovered that he broke a Blood vessel in his head, his Father is very dangerously ill with the gout in his head & does not yet know that his son is dead. Young Mrs. McCall is dying in a consumption. She was to be bled that day & w[oul]d not till her husband return'd. Dr. Rush told her he was unwell at his Fathers & would not come home that day. She instantly suppos'd he was dead & went out of her senses. I believe she is still in that dreadful situation. Betsy Cadwalader died Saturday morn[in]g. I think Fanny looks very well in Black. Sunday

morning I went to Presbyterian meeting in expectation of hearing Princeton Smith preach but I was disappointed. Tom Cadwalader is not yet come home. Thursday one of the Troops came in with 20 prisoners. I am very sorry neither Mary, Harry or George will write to me.

Adieu my Dear Mother and Believe me your Truly affectionate & Dutiful

A Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Near Dover
Delaware]

Philadelphia, April 27, 1799

My dear Mother,

Yours of the 21st came safely to me. I am glad you have at length got a good Parson in Dover and hope you may be fortunate enough to keep him. Thursday I was at Christ Church twice in the morning I heard a very fine Sermon by the Bishop, & in the afternoon, one by Mr. Blackwell. I suppose you saw the Deaths in the McCall Family, in the papers Thursday afternoon. I saw the funeral of poor Peggy Clymer that was, none of the Miss McCalls' were there. But I never saw such dejected looking creatures as their Brothers. In less than a week they have lost a Father, a Brother and a Sister. Mrs. Travis is bro[ugh]t to bed, but I don't know what she has. Tuesday all the Troops came in. I only saw the Porters. I saw James Hamilton & Tom Cadwalader in Church. Wednesday Countess Tilly went to Court about her marriage and I believe she is gone home with her husband. I wrote to you on Saturday. I hope you have received the letter and things by Mr. Battell, he went I believe on Sunday. You need not send for me before July. Mrs. R. moves in june to Frankfort, but if you wish me to return before, send for me. I wish very much to see you all. You must not conclude from this that I wish to be sent for now, for I do not. It's possible I may bring Becky Hamilton home with me, as Molly will be with Lyle. Monday morning Peggy O'Brien came to see me, she desired her love to you, and bid me tell you she expects every day to be in the Straw. She said she wrote three times to you since she left Dover, their provisions gave out before they got Home, and they were almost starved. She has been very ill since she got here, and has been bled several times, however she now looks very well.

I have two muslin petticoats in my drawer, if you will cut one of them up, and make her a little frock or two, I dare say she will be very pleased with them, and I will give them to her, she lives in Pewter Platter Alley. She did not bring Mary Ann to see me as she was not well. Sunday morning I heard Morgan preach. I was so tired I would have given the world to have been out of church. Sunday evening I saw the Chev[alie]r De Frerere, he ask'd after Mary & sent compliments.

I have never seen William Smith. Richard is gone home. I did not get you an antwerp Raspberry when you first wrote for one, because Mrs. Rundle had sent Mary one, and I did not get the letter wherein you mentioned it last, till Mr. B. was gone. I hope you will be pleased with the Pocket Book and everything I sent home. If you knew of a good opportunity I could send you some of the finest Limes I ever saw, 4 for eleven pence. I think them very cheap and they are as fresh as if they had just been taken off the tree. If you do not know of an opportunity, and wish the Limes I will send them by the stage in my little trunk. I wish you could get some Asparagus up as Mrs. Weed (Mrs. R.'s married daughter) who is a great favourite of mine is near being confined and wants some. Bell Rowan is now sick with a violent cold. Mr. Smith, my drawing master says I must send you a sample of my drawing & that I will do by the first opportunity. I am extremely fond of [drawing, though I was] not anxious to begin. I have given up all idea or hope of hearing from either Mary, Harry or George, this is the last time I ever intend to say anything about their coolness, what can occasion it I know not. Pray what Name does Brother A.s child go by.

Adieu my Dear Mother and Believe me your Truly affectionate and dutiful

A Ridgely

Love to all my Friends
Mrs. Gore & Mrs. Rowan desire compliments.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Near Dover
Delaware]

Philadelphia May 5, 1799

My dear Mother

Your letter of the 28 of April, I receiv'd on Tuesday morning. I am very much pleased to find you like my work. I'm sure you'l like my drawing.

Mr. Smith is very anxious you should see some. Yesterday morning I saw Mat. Lowber, I was in a Shop and he came in a few minutes after me, at first he did not speak, but in a little while asked if I was not Miss Ridgely. I told him yes, he then ask'd me if I resided in the City and how long since I left Dover. I saw Huston last week in Third Street but he was on the oposit side. Yesterday morning Tom Cadwalader came down to ask me to spend the day with his mother. I did so and was very much pleas'd. I went to Palmer to see about your shoes as soon as I got your letter. He says he has lost your last and don't know the size of your foot. Mrs. Travis has a daughter, there's a dispute about its Name, whether it shall be Williamina or Elizabeth. Mrs. T. chuses the former but Aunt Bond will not have it.

In my last I wrote you the fate of poor Peggy Clymer & her Father in Law. It is now time for me to dress for church, if I have time afterwards I'll write more. For the present Adieu my Dear Mother and believe me your Truly affectionate and dutyful

A Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Near Dover
Delaware]

Philadelphia, May 10th 1799

My dear Mother

Yours of the 5 Ins[tan]t came safely to hand. I am extremely sorry you did not receive my of the Sunday before. as I mention'd many things that I cannot at present recollect, and that I wish'd you to know. Among the rest I wrote you I had seen Peggy O'Brien and that she was near being confin'd. I have never neglected writing to you on Saturday or Sunday since I have been in the City.

Last evening I was agreeably surprised by the sight of Mr. Jones, but I was never more astonished than when he told me George intended to go in the Navy. Pray what put this in his head, tell him I am very much hurt and offended at his never writing to me. Mr. J. is to return Sunday or Monday, I shall therefore not write to you on Sunday. Count Tilly has not yet found his Countess and I believe he never will. It is by some people suppos'd she is on her way to England. However, be she where she may, it is a profound secret. Poor Mrs. McCall left two children (Boys.) This morn-

ing Maria Smith call'd to see me, and ask'd me to drink tea there this evening, but I am going to the Play, and will do myself the pleasure of drinking tea with them some other time. I shall not close this till tomorrow.

Adieu for the present

A. Ridgely

Saturday Morning

Dear Mother

Last night I went to the Play with Mrs. Liston, Miss Bond, Mr. Liston, Mr. Rich, Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Thornton, Mr. Erskine, George MacDonald & Lord Henry Stuart. The latter I think has a very handsom face, but a shocking person. Mrs. Merry acted the character of the Child of Nature. She is on the stage angelic. Mrs. Travis calls her daughter Betsy. As to Mrs. Blodget I have never seen her but twice, she has never ask'd me to her house since I have been in the City. Frees, one of the Ring leaders of the insurrection is condemn'd to be hung, in four weeks. I now feel quite anxious to get home, pray how long is Mary to stay in the City.

I send you by Mr. Jones my drawing. I have not yet began to Paint, but to day Mr. Smith will bring me colours. He says I make great improvement, The Landscape shaded in pensil is the second lesson I had. I send you ears, Feet and a Flower. I saw Mrs. Patten going to meeting some weeks ago, but she was riding, and I believe did not know me. The Rundles and Prime sail for England Wednesday or Thursday. Prime has been sick I saw him yesterday, & he looks ill. I pity Jane very much, but I hope all may do well yet. Give my love to her, and all my acquaintance. Adieu my Dear Mother, Believe me t[o be] your truly affectionate & dutiful

A. Rid[gely]

'tis said that young Adams,
admires Sally Gibson.
Sally Goldsborough is very well.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Near Dover
Delaware
Fav[o]r of Mr. Jones]

Philadelphia May 18, 1799

My Dear Mother

I hope e'er this you have received my letter by Mr. Jones, as he left this place on Tuesday. I am much pleased at Georges intention of ent'ring our Navy, and most sincerely hope he may be one of its brightest ornaments, but I am surprised you never mentioned it to me before, as you know everything that concerns him, or *any* of the Family must be interesting to me. I'm glad to hear that all your mornings are ushered in by the Drum & Fife as nothing is so charming to me.

Peggy Hamilton says she can't spare Becky, neither can she leave James. Andrew is to sail for Batavia in a week or two, both Peggy and Becky are very anxious to visit Dover, but I fear they never will, they insist on my spending next winter with them, however this you must decide. To morrow I drink tea with the Miss Penrose's I am invited to Bonds and Welches, but prefer Penroses. Today Mrs. Cadwalader wish'd me to spend with her, but it rains very fast and is very cold & damp, I shall therefore continue where I am. Last Sunday I spent at Hamiltons, and in the evening was introduced to two of the Miss Fenno's, who are very pretty and greatly admired.

Sunday Morning

I have now my dear Mother only time to Subscribe myself your truly affectionate and Dutiful

A. Ridgely

Love to all enquiring Friends

Harmony Court

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Near Dover
Delaware]

Philadelphia May 27, 1799

My dear Mother

I have just return'd from visiting Mrs. Roberts, the Lady with whom you once Boarded. She was very glad to see me, and has made me almost Tipsy with the best Cyder I ever drank. I went with the Miss Parsons to see their Father, he arrived here Thursday afternoon. They talk of leaving this place for New York on Wednesday. Sunday morning I saw Huston. I think Philadelphia don't often agree with the Constitution of We Dela-

warians, for both Lowber and Huston look wretched. Thursday morn[in]g I saw Mrs. Alston and Betsy go down Fourth Street, but she did not see me. Yesterday even[in]g Jim Harper pass't by me, he was just going to speak, but I suppose he tho[ugh]t I didn't recollect him as indeed I did not till he had pass't. The first of this week Mrs. Cadwalader and the Bonds, I suppose, and Erskine, for he's always taging after them, went to Downings Town, and return'd last evening. This afternoon I'm to spend at Poyntells. Mrs. Roberts made many kind enquir'ys after you. and desired Love. I'm now looking out every day for Harry and Mary. I'm very anxious to get Home.

Sunday Morn[in]g
D[ea]r Mother

Instead of spending last evening at Poyntells, as we had intended, we all went to the Play. The Miss Parsons with their Father and I with Becky Bond. I was much more pleased with this than the last I was at. But I must now prepare for church as the Bell is ringing. Adieu my dear Mother,

Believe me your truly affectionate and Dutiful

A. Ridgely

Love to every Body. I saw Nat Sykes at the Play last night. The Delaware has come, or is expected up in a day or two.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Near Dover
Delaware]

Though Ann was away from home for a few weeks, in 1802 and possibly on other occasions between the springs of 1799 and 1803, it was not until early summer of the latter year, when she was nineteen, that her correspondence with her mother again gave a detailed story. At that time her health was frail, and the tragic death of her brother George in 1800 had saddened her deeply. In June, 1803, she rode his horse "Cub" to Duck Creek and on to New Castle; then to Prospect Hill to visit her old friend Sally Banning. The girls had been friends since they were children. Sally's family had lived in Dover when her

father, John Banning, was alive, and not far distant after her mother's remarriage to Dr. William McKee, though she herself had spent much time at boarding schools, the last of them Mrs. Capron's in Philadelphia. Shortly before this letter was written, the McKees had moved to Wilmington. Ann's account of her visit begins with a brief report of a hot and uncomfortable trip from Dover.

Wilmington
June 26th 1803

According to your desire, my dear Mother, I have seated myself to inform you of our safe arrival here, after the most fatiguing ride I ever had. We this instant got here, last night we staid at Duck Creek, and did not get to New Castle 'till 2 today where we continued 'till past 5. Rogers was the only person I saw there, he was, as usual, extremely kind & attentive, and insisted on our staying all night, but I was so very much fatigued, that I know I shall be stiff tomorrow, and preferred coming on at once. We are now at Mr. Brinton's, but as soon as I can come I shall proceed to Doct[o]r M'Kee's. The weather is so intensely hot, that we took our time for coming, it is now rather more pleasant. Tell Sally I just saw Kitty and Hetty Broom with quite a party of beaux & belles go up the street, but I retreated from the window, for fear of observation, neither my dress or spirits being such as to make me wish it. You need not expect Harry on Wednesday, it is really too hot to think of returning so soon, my Backbone & shoulder blades I believe are almost thro' the skin. Harry is hurrying me, 'tis almost sunset. For God sake, my dear mother, be careful of yourself, & do, I entreat, make some body go & stay with you, during my absence. Cub is very well, his breast is not at all hurt. Say for me most affect[ionate]ly to Mary, & T W & every one who thinks of me.

Adieu, most truly yours

AR

Sunday

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Near
Dover]

Tuesday morn[in]g

As I have a few minutes to myself, I cannot more agreeably employ them, than by scribbling to you, my dear Mother. All our Friends here are well, and as affectionate and attentive as possible. Yesterday morning Sally & I called on Mrs. Wethered, & the girls, and drank tea with Hetty Broom, who had other company, invited previous to my arrival, & as soon as she heard I was come, insisted on my being of her party which I declined, 'till I found Sally wished to go, but would not leave me & Mrs. B. told me they were only to have "neighbors & neighbor's children." The company consisted of the Miss Drivers, Miss Hunn, Miss Thomson, Miss Oflin, Miss Banning, Miss Huggins & myself. Capt[ai]n White, Mr. Caldwell, T. Broom (of N. C.) Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Crow, Harry, & young Driver. Hetty behaved most attentively, & genteely. I was never so much pleased with her. After tea (which was after moonlight) we all walked to the Brandywine, where we seated ourselves on the Bridge, while Reynolds & Caldwell played a great many charming tunes, on the Flute to which the ladies joined their voices. Mr. C. played Marches, for Capt[ai]n W, Hetty Broom & myself to march to, as we returned. I am very much pleased with both the Miss Drivers, particularly Ann, the eldest, who will soon, I imagine, be married to James Broom, with whom, also, I am highly pleased. White was more agreeable than I ever saw him, and very attentive. This afternoon Mrs. Wethered & the Girls are to drink Tea here, & in the Evening N B, & the Miss D's are to come to spend the night, the Captain is to be here too.

I was fortunate enough to meet with some India Muslin in Wilmington, yard & three quarters wide, which I hope will do for Caps for you, it is not so fine as I wished, but will be good for common. Today I hope to hear from you, feel very anxious indeed, & if disappointed shall be very unhappy. I wrote to Willy yesterday. Do pray, my dear Mother, get Sally Hall, or some clever woman to be with you, I am indeed wretched about you, lest you should be more lonesome, than when I was with you. Harry has just told me that he goes to New Castle this Evening, & home tomorrow. I do not know what to do about staying behind, I am almost distracted at leaving you, but 'tis impossible to leave here at this time, I have nothing ready, I wish I had not come. Do tell me how you feel, & how you are, I hope Sally Wethered did not leave you today.

Harry is ready to go, I really cannot say anything to amuse you, for I am wretched myself, & shall be, 'till I hear you have someone with you, I shall be at home as soon as I meet with a proper opportunity. Mrs. McKee, & Sally, desire a great deal of Love. Do, I entreat of you, take care of yourself.

Adieu, my dear Mother—Believe me as ever

Your most Affect[ionate]

AR

Tuesday afternoon,
June 28th, 1803

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
near Dover
Delaware
H. M. Ridgely, Esq.]

The Mr. Shields mentioned in the following letter, who was so embarrassed at meeting Ann, had fought a duel with her brother Henry a few months previous.

Wilmington, Del. July 1st, 1803.

Your Letter, my dear Mother, which I received on Wednesday gave me infinite pleasure by assuring me you were better without than with me, but I fear you must be too lonesome, especially of an Evening. Sally Hall, I hope is with you, and that you are well. I saw S. Wethered last night. She said you were more cheerful and better every way than when I left you. On Wednesday, I spent the day and night with Miss Macmullan, with quite a party. I refused positively on Tuesday to go there and engaged to ride with White to the Paper Mill and all about the Country, but I was solemnly assured there would be no company there except those who went from here; namely, the Miss Drivers, M. Broom and S. Banning, and as A. and H. Driver appeared to think their going prevented me, I apologized to White and joined the other party, but the Captain crossed the Ferry with us and regretted he could not go all the way. I rode with Broom of New Castle in his four wheeled Gigg and really never had a more agreeable companion. In the Evening I rode with him again, and did not return to Macmullan's

till past 10 o'clock. We went twice round New Castle and two miles beyond it. The prospect was indeed the most perfect I ever beheld, nor had I ever a more pleasant ride.

No person dined at M's but Ann and Hester Driver, Hetty Broom, Sally Banning, John Caldwell, Young Driver, N. C. Broom and myself. Doct[o]r Coltsborough, Captain Bennett, Mr. and Mrs. Rodney, Miss Hunn, Shields and Gordon spent the afternoon there. The R's, Shields, Driver, Coltsborough and Bennett went home in the Evening. The rest stayed all night. I never saw any person in so much confusion or so embarassed as Shields was when introduced to me—he colored and could not speak. I was agitated but pitied him so much that I did all in my power to relieve him. I asked him for a glass of water which he flew to get and presented with a trembling hand, but after he found me amicably disposed his uneasiness wore off and he has been ever since as attentive and polite to me as possible, and when in company with me, directs the chief of his conversation to me. Indeed he is cheerful and agreeable and appears to have an uncommonly fine temper. He says he should have known me by my likeness to Harry. He told John Lea of Brandywine that he was *enraptured* with my conduct to him; indeed, as the good people say, it was a *trial* at first, and if he had been unconcerned I never could have acted so, but "*Heavenly pity touched my heart*", and I rejoice at it.

Last night I spent with H. Broom and Ann Driver. The girls were going to a Ball but Sally would not leave me until I consented to go to Town with her, and as I had not been to see Mary Vining, Miss George or M[aria] Dickinson, I chose to take that opportunity. I am sure no person on Earth was ever treated with more affectionate tenderness and attention than I have been, not only by every person I knew here but by those I never saw before. Miss Hun is particularly kind and polite. I saw Jim Canby, his wife and sisters, the two Lea's and several others at Miss George's. The C's instantly recognized me and begged me to visit them. John Lea and I sat with M. D. till near eleven, when we went to Broom's where I had not been three minutes before my croney as Hetty calls her cousin James, came to the stairs and begged me to come down and set with him, for that he was lonesome and disgusted at the idea of dissipation. I never saw any man so agitated and distressed as he was. He had just heard from the relations of his wife in England, who were ignorant of her death, and entreated

him to bring her to see them. He spoke in the most affectionate and exalted terms of her and them, but said he never could inform them of her loss. I think I never met with any man possess't of so much sensibility, tho' at the same time I think him imprudent to express himself as he does when he is engaged to be married so soon. Ann Driver is a sweet engaging Girl but too gay for him. He says he cannot bear it.

We are invited by Miss Hun to drink tea with her at Rodney's place today, but have declined going. She is extremely clever.

(Saturday) Last Evening, contrary to my wish or intention, I was prevailed on to go to Maria Hun's party. Shields came, he said, on purpose to implore me to go and as Sally wished it & the Doct[o]r & Mrs. M[ckee] requested I would, I consented, but not 'till Shields assured me the company consisted of Rodney's family and Broom's with one or two gentlemen only and the Doctor and Mrs. Logan, but I found they were to have a dance, and as I was very unwell, I could not bear it. Maria H. was as kind as she could be, so indeed was everybody, but if White had been the nearest relation I had on earth, he could not have been more perfectly attentive or tender of my feelings, and as I would not go into the room where they were dancing, I accepted his offer of escorting me home. M. Hun and Ann Driver walked with us as far as Tilton Hill. As soon as Sally knew I was gone, which was about 9 o'clock, she returned. I drank tea with the Party which was very large. Today we spend with Mr. Wethered's family and in the Evening Ann and Hester Driver and H. B. return with us. Mrs. McKee thinks Hester and I alike, tho' she says I am Harry's image. I suppose that's the reason I'm such a favorite. George Strawbridge, in every movement reminds me of H[arry?].

(Sunday) I have this instant returned from Wethered's where we spent a very agreeable day and night. Sally and I were the only dinner company. Miss Stockton, E. George, M[aria] Dickinson and John and George Strawbridge spent the afternoon there. The two latter are as agreeable, cheerful young men as I ever met with, and both handsome and genteel. John is very much sunburnt owing to his late voyage from the East Indies. Tell Harry he made many kind inquiries concerning him. You cannot conceive how much I have been complimented on my behavior to Shields.

On Tuesday, by particular invitation, we, the Wethered's and Straw-

bridge's, drink Tea with Miss Stockton, with whom I am much pleased, but Mrs. Logan is by far the handsomest woman I have seen. I shall spend a few days this week with S. and K. W.[ethered]. I have also engaged to be some days with M. D.[ickinson]. Mary Vining begged that S. Banning and myself would stay several days with her, but that is out of the question tho' we both intend visiting her. Henry is just as he used to be. Miss George and Eliza are extremely kind and wish me to be with them. Indeed, I find it impossible to stay at home. It would be confining Sally and giving offense to all my Friends and acquaintance here. White asked me to go with him in a chair to Philad[elphi]a and return in a day or two but I declined his offer, for several reasons. I am better here than I could be there. I have not seen Rogers since this day week. He was coming over with Broom the other day but he had a swelled face which was very painful. He is so infatuated with Miss Johns that he cannot breathe out of New Castle. 'Tis said her conduct is very reprehensible, that tho' she is positively engaged to Stockton, she has used every art in her power to gain the attention and affection of Rogers, in which she has completely succeeded. Broom told me the other Evening that he knew she was engaged to T. S. and meant only to coquette Rogers. She is quite famous for such things.

I was extremely disappointed at not hearing from you by Thursday mail, but I hope there is a Letter for me in the Office. Willy has never answered my letter. I think her conduct very strange.

How comes on all our Kent Friends? Does Horsey and Hall visit you often? M[ary] is quite delighted with Horsey.

Possibly I may add more ere I conclude this, but I suspect I shall not. Do pray take the greatest care of Guard, Ann, Bronte, Tom and Sam and let me find everything alive and well on my return, and above all take care of yourself. Mrs. McKee and Sally etc., desire Love. Say for me affectionately to Harry, Mary, Brother and Sister Ridgely, brother N., M.W.R., and everybody. Adieu, my dear Mother—Believe me ever your

A. R.

Write, I entreat you

Tuesday, July 5th. I am quite uneasy lest you should be so at not having heard from me by yesterday's mail. I should have sent this but forgot they close the letter bag here on Sunday, and neglected sending. I received yours yesterday. I am afraid you have not entirely recovered. Do, pray, be

careful. Hetty Broom, the Miss Drivers and their brother, are here to dine. In the Evening we all go to Stockton's. I accompanied Mrs. M[ckee] to meeting Sunday afternoon to hear Doct[o]r Read preach. I was never more pleased with people in their own house than Mrs. Read and her husband. They appear like old acquaintance and treat me in the most cordial and friendly manner. White spent Sunday afternoon with us. Yesterday Jim Tilton drank tea here. I did not see him, tho' he inquired several times for me. I was busy but I suppose I must see him some day or other tho' it will go sorely against me. This evening I go home with the Wethered's to stay some days. My friends here say they shall claim me on Thursday or Friday at any rate. Once more adieu,

ANN R.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Near Dover
Delaware]

"Brother and Sister Ridgely" and MWR were Abraham, his wife and their thirteen-year-old daughter, Mary Wynkoop Ridgely. "Brother N.", of course, was the Chancellor, while the pets Ann was anxious about were her family of cats, and I believe, a dog that had belonged to George.

The letter written by Ann Ridgely on July 8th, 1803, to her daughter, Ann, is characteristic, although I think her criticism of Ann's gaiety would have been more severe, if she had not realized the child's illness and need of diversion.

Dover, 8th of July, 1803

My dear Child,

Your letter dated from the 1st to the 5th June I rec[eive]d on Wednesday Even[in]g. You are very good in giving me so much of your time and I wish I c[oul]d entirely approve of the manner in w[hi]ch you informed me some other part of it has been spent. If you have anything like coquettery in your nature, I am sure I must be blind, for I never have discovered anything in you that appeared to bear the least resemblance to it—and as I think a person such as you are the most likely to be deceived by it in others, I think it my duty to tell you that it is by no means confined to our sex. Indeed, to speak plainly, I think it has of late abounded rather more among

the other, and I must add that I am very much out in my opinion if you have not met with *one gentleman* at least very thoroughly practiced in that art—and strange as you may think it I have formed this opinion from your letter only, for my eyes have never met the person I allude to.

I am pleased at your declining a jaunt to Philad[elphi]a—it w[oul]d have been improper at any rate, and particularly at this Season of the year.

The meeting with Mr. Shields must have been a little embarrassing both to you and him, I sh[oul]d suppose, and I am glad you were able to get the better of it so quickly. Everybody I have met with who is acquainted with him says, "he is good natured." That, united with good sense and firmness is indeed a most desirable quality—without them it is often a misfortune. Possibly Mr. S. possesses all three, yet I must confess I have my doubts on this subject. I must observe to you that among the number of my acquaintance throughout the whole course of my life, I have invariably found that those persons who made the most fuss on all occasions, and talked the most of their sensibility have had in reality less tenderness of heart, less charity, in short less of every truly amiable and endearing virtue than their neighbours who perhaps were scarcely ever heard to pronounce the fashionable words "sweet sensibility."

I must now tell you that I think you are wanting in point of politeness to Miss Mackmullan and all the ladies of her party when you left their society to ride with any gentleman. I will say also that I think the gentleman you rode with was flattered by your condescension and pleased with the opportunity of exciting a painful sensation in the breast of one whom honour sh[oul]d bind him to render ever happy by every means in his power. And now without mentioning any other part of his cond[uc]t I am much mistaken if what is s[ai]d above will not give him a clear and indisputable title to the character of a male coquette.

I have never had the pleasure of meeting with either Dr. Read or his Lady, but from their characters and the manner in w[hi]ch you write me they rec[eive]d you, I think you must have been much obliged to Mrs. McKee for her kindness in introducing you to them.

Let me remind you to call at Miss Vining's as often as you can spare time, and if you have not before now told her how very much I felt myself obliged by her kind attention to your Brother Harry, pray remember to do it the next time you see her.

I hope you will not be a stranger at Mr. Dickinson's. His daughter Maria is s[ai]d to be a lovely girl, with whom I w[oul]d wish you to be acquainted, and after the repeated and pressing invitation you have rec[eive]d in so kind and friendly a manner from Mr. D. I sh[oul]d be really hurt if you were to return without being sometimes at his house.

I have written a long letter, indeed much longer than I had any thought of doing when I began, for to tell you the truth I am not in spirits as it is a great while since I have rec[eive]d a line or heard one word from Willy and she is generally one of the most punctual correspond[en]ts I ever met with, I am distressed by fearing she is sick, and if I do not get a letter this Evening I shall be wretched indeed. Her last was dated 22nd June.

I must now charge you (notwithstand[in]g I have expressed my disapprobation of your flirting round N[ew] Castle 'till 10 o'clock at night in a gay gig) to let me know all your movements. Some I shall certainly approve, and where I cannot do that a caution not to repeat them will undoubtedly follow. Either will I am very sure be rec[eive]d with gratitude by an affectionate dutiful child.

I have not a word of news to tell you. I believe everybody in this neighbourhood is well.

Say for me affectionately to Mrs. McKee, Miss Banning and all our other friends.

Harry was here yesterday and told me he had a fever. I was rejoiced, however, after the most deliberate and strict examination of his pulse in declaring to him that I could not find it.

Heaven bless you my dear Girl, and all the rest of the beloved Children and friends of your ever affectionate Mother

A. Ridgely

I sent a long letter to you
and answered one I received from
S. Wethered, by the last mail.
I hope they are rec[eive]d.

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely
at Doctor McKee's
near Wilmington
Delaware]

Sunday, July 10th

I did not receive yours, my dear Mother, of the 8th till one O'clock today, as I have been with the Wethereds since Tuesday night. Thursday I accompanied them, & Miss Stockton, here to tea, and returned this morning to stay. Mrs. McKee, the Doct[o]r & Sally were quite flattering in their entreaty for my return, they say they were lost without me, & cannot part with me again, or at least to stay away so long. I received a Letter from you, one from Willy & one from Harry, on Thursday. I hope you heard from Willy on Friday, she was quite well, & cheerful, when she wrote & mentioned having written a few days previous, to you. She told me also that Richard Ascough was dead.

I really could not help being surprised on perusing your last Letter, and could not possibly conceive to whom you alluded, when you spoke of a "Male Coquette," nor 'till I had finished the Letter, were my doubts solved. Believe me, I never saw a being on Earth that I think more perfectly free from the character, than the Gentleman you mean. So far from wishing to give pain to the Lady to whom he is engaged, it was at *her particular* request, that I accepted a seat in his carriage and when I spoke of the ride in the Evening, I meant that the whole party partook of that amusement, but in different Carriages, nor did any go so far as we, except John MacMullan & Hetty Broom. The Miss Drivers left Wilmington on Thursday, they had quite a party to New Castle, & Mr. B. accompanied them to Maryland. They dined with us on Tuesday, & we went together to drink Tea at Stockton's. Wednesday Mrs. Freeman & Susan Hamilton spent the day at Wethereds', in the afternoon the three Mr. Hamilton's came, & in the Even[in]g we took a charming walk up the race. The next afternoon S. B[anning], & Matilda W[ethered] & myself, spent with Susan, where we had everything good, & handsome, nor did I ever see a happier, or better tempered family, than they appear to be, they all have peace, benevolence, & content painted on their countenances. There are four Boys & four Girls, the eldest is a Sea Capt[ai]n & the third, his Mate; they arrived about a week ago, after an absence of fourteen months, and that must have added to the happiness of their family. Arch, is so like Climson, that he seem'd like an old acquaintance, & he speaks like Climson, too. Susan is just what she used to be except that she has grown taller, & thinner. The Wethereds & I, paid Doct[o]r Tilton a visit on Wednesday morn[in]g, which he re-

turned in a day or two. He was very attentive & showed me every part of his house & garden, the prospect from the top of the house is grand indeed.

Mr. Dickinson came to see me at Mrs. W's and repeated his invitations for me to be with Maria sometime this week. I think it probable I shall go there.

Lewen Wethered left his father's last night. I think him the most disagreeable creature I ever met with, indeed I was never so tired of any thing on Earth.

Tell Harry I will write to him in a few days, at present he must excuse me, the teeth I have been so long cutting, are very painful. Yesterday I was invited, with company, to drink tea at Mrs. Freeman's, but didn't go. Mrs. Brooks saw me, & pressed me much to spend an afternoon with her, (as did also S. Loockerman) which I intend doing. There is quite a hurricane, I fear I shall not get this to the post office tonight, pray do not be uneasy, if you do not hear from me every week, as I shall certainly write, but possibly I may not get the letters to the mail. I saw two beautiful pieces of linen, y[ar]d wide, for three & sixpence p[e]r y[ar]d, finer, I think than Harry's new shirts. I want linen, so, I believe, do you, & that will do especially well. If you chuse any purchased, for either of us, I wish you would enclose money & let me know at once, lest it should be gone. There are very pretty cotton stockings at Donaldson's, for 8/². Do write by the first post, & let me know if you wish anything got. I have told you everything I can recollect and as Mrs. M[ckee] is quite alone, I will conclude this scrawl. Give my Love to all Friends at home, & do, my dear mother, be careful of yourself & be cheerful & happy. Mrs. McKee & Sally desire their love.

Adieu my dear Mother
Ever your truly affect[iona]te
AR

Sunday afternoon
[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
near Dover
Delaware]

Sunday Afternoon
July 17th. 1803

Knowing your anxiety, my dear Mother, I seat myself to write a few lines, to acknowledge the reception of your last which has, indeed, made

me very uneasy. I sincerely hope the Dyssentary is not in Dover, and that you are all well, I shall be miserable 'till I know you are so. Harry, I trust, has quite recovered his indisposition, do, my dear mother tell me truly how you all do, that I may return if any of the family are sick. I am afraid you will fatigue yourself, and be worried with the family. My Friends here are as kind as 'tis possible for human beings to be. Sally B, Hetty Broom, & myself have been here since last Evening. Tonight we go to Doct[o]r McKee's. To morrow we drink tea at Mrs. Bayard's. In the even[in]g I shall return with the Wethered's, who are also invited, and continue some days. Mary Bassett & H. Broom paid Sally & me a morn[in]g visit on Friday. I have not seen Mrs. B—except across the street that night. She looked very well & I hear she is so. Thursday after tea we called on M. Vining, & M. Wynkoop, who is still in Wilmington. Shields told me he dined at Brother N. last week & that he was well. Monday aft[ernoo]n we spent at Doct[o]r Read's, where I am uniformly treated with the most friendly attention. Mrs. R's nieces, the Miss Wilsons' have return'd. I am extremely pleased with Betsey. Yesterday morning White, Mary Wynkoop & Eliza George, came out to see us, when they were going, they begged us to ride with them & as they were in a Coach we accepted the invitation & went to see Doct[o]r Tilton, with whom we spent two hours very agreeably. You cannot conceive how great a favorite I am with him, he is always begging me to visit him, & culls his finest fruit for me, White swears I have made a conquest of the old man, & shall shortly be mistress of the Mansion. Miss Brobson & Miss Macomb drank tea with us on Tuesday, they both apologized for not having visited me sooner, & entreated us to come shortly to see them. Betsey Macomb was very sociable & clever & sung 'till I pitied her. She did not refuse one song we proposed. Miss Brobson is infinitely handsomer than any girl I have seen in Wilmington, indeed I think her beautiful, & very agreeable. We, with the addition of Mr. Broom, rode through New-Port, this morn[in]g and return'd quite fatigued. Thursday we had a slight gust, very little rain, but one flash of lightning which struck the Swanwick, John Hamilton's ship, lying at the wharf, split the mast to atoms, & knocked down one of the boys, belonging to her, he, however, soon recovered, & there is no harm done, except to the top mast. I have been asleep ever since dinner, & feel as stupid as possible, you must, therefore, on that account excuse this scrawl, really I scarce know what I write.

Let me again entreat to be acquainted if any of you get sick, and do, pray take care of yourself. Write constantly to me, & tell me every thing.

Mary Wynkoop is very well, & was in charming spirits yesterday, the first time I saw her, she was dull. She is thin, but not pale, as I at first thought. Mrs. Dickinson has been very ill, but is getting better, had it not been for her indisposition, I should have gone there, ere this. All friends here desire Love to you &c. present me affect[ionate]ly to the family, & all my other Friends in Kent. I saw Mrs. Barker the other evening, she is to continue here two weeks. I will conclude this dull Letter, to Willy I must write soon.

Adieu, my dear Mother
As Ever most affectionately
Your
AR

You said nothing of the Linen I wrote of—I really think it a bargain.

Miss Huggins is to be married on Tuesday, to Mr. Egly. *She* is much talked of.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Near Dover
Delaware]

Wilmington
July 24th

My D[ea]r Mother—

I have this minute returned from seeing the last sad duties paid to the remains of your Friend, Mrs. Dickinson who bid an eternal adieu to this world of cares last Friday night. Mr. D. & Sally appeared composed, tho' in affliction, poor Maria was near fainting, & in an agony of Grief. The walk was a warm one, but we rode back. To day I dine with Hetty Broom (with whom Sally Banning & I, spent the night) and drink tea with Mrs. Bayard & Mary. Last Even[in]g the Wethereds, S.B., H. Broom, S. Loockerman, the two Mrs. Broom's, Capt[ai]n White & myself, spent with Miss Hun, there was also a Major Claiborn there, who is the greatest fool I ever saw. Tuesday we had a party to spend the day at a place called the Graving Banks, two or three miles above this, to which we sailed, in

the Boat of the Swanwick. White, the Strawbridge's, & Hamilton's were chief managers, nothing could have been conducted with more propriety, nor could any set of people have behaved more agreeably. Every person agrees in saying it was the most charming party they ever were at. The company was select & sociable, consisting of Miss Bassett, Miss Banning, Miss Broom, Miss Brobson, Miss Wynkoop, Miss S & K Wethered, Miss Stockton, Miss Wilson & myself. The three Mr. Hamilton's, Mr. White, J. & G Strawbridge, John Lea, Daniel Polk & T. Macomb. We had everything that was good, & every body seem'd pleased, sociable & attentive. We spent several hours very agreeably on board the Swanwick, which is a large handsome ship but the sailing was charming. Friday I drank tea with the Wethereds & S. Loockerman, at Mrs. Freeman's, in the Even[in]g we were join'd by George Strawbridge, Tom Macomb & Arch & James Hamilton, who escorted us to Prospect Hill, where I have been some days. The day aft'r. the party White, Macomb, A. Hamilton & G. Strawbridge spent the afternoon with us, at Mrs. Wethered's. We spent a most pleasant Evening at Bayard's, Mary, John Strawbridge & I made tea in the other room, they had the greatest profusion of everything delightful there.

I had a Letter from Willy the other day, she is well & happy. I rejoice to find keeping house beneficial to your health, & most ardently hope to find you greatly improv'd by it. Everybody says I look infinitely better than when I came here. I certainly have more colour. I wish I had patience to tell you all I wish but indeed it would take me too long, & dinner is nearly ready. Sally Banning told me last night, that I should not see Kent 'till the middle of August. Hetty begs to be affect[ionate]ly remembered, she is one of the kindest, most attentive creatures in existence.

Adieu, my dear Mother
Say for me most truly to all my friends.
Believe me, ever your
AR

I do, indeed, feel greatly for poor Mr. and Mrs. Truitt.

Tell me how Mrs. Clayton &c. are, & give my love to them.

Everything is perishing for rain, thank heaven it appears now as if we were to have some. Since I came here we have only had a *sprinkle* twice.

Sam Wethered's wife is very ill, she had a dead son on Wednesday last. Sunday morning.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
near Dover
Delaware]

Tuesday Morn'g

Tho' I wrote to you, my dear Mother, on Sunday, I cannot let White visit Kent without a Line to you; by this day's mail, I hope to hear from you, your last was so short that it scarce deserved to be called a letter. Mr. & Mrs. Rodney, & White, have spent the morning with Sally & me, Mrs. M. & the Doctr. were at Meeting. This afternoon we are to drink tea with Sally Brobson & Betsey Macomb. Yesterday I returned from Mrs. Wethereds', Sally, Kitty, Hetty Broom & White spent the Even[in]g with us. K.W. was never so agreeable or so pretty, as she is now, nor did I ever love her so much, her manners are infinitely more pleasing than they used to be. I have purchased for you two pair of very handsome Cotton Stockings, & if I *possibly* can, I will buy more. Miss Donaldson has them at 9/d they are fine, & I hope, good.

You offered me, a short time since, your black lace apron, to make a shawl of, I have often wished for it, here, and if you will give it me now, you will infinitely oblige me by sending it as soon as possible, my black veil, at any rate, send, it is in my Drawer in Harry's room. I am very anxious for *both* of them, Shawls & Veils (black) are worn very much here. I want a good many things, which, to appear genteel, are necessary, but I can not afford to get them, and Sally says she will not consent to my leaving here before the middle of next month, Harry writes me, he shall be up then.

Dinner is ready, you will, I hope, excuse this *note*. Write very soon tell me how you all are. Adieu, my dear Mother,

Yours most affect[ionate]ly
AR

July 26th

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
near Dover
Delaware
Capt'n White]

July 29th. Friday Morn[in]g 5 o'clock
Sunday 31st.

By what is written on the other side of this, you will observe it was intended to have gone by White, but unfortunately he went about five minutes before it, & the small bundle reached his lodgings. I was extremely mortified, at not sending it by him. I went to Church twice on Friday. The Bishop preached in the morning & confirmed a number of persons. In the afternoon Mr. Wilmer delivered a sermon, over the body of Mrs. Hendrickson, of this place. This morning I accompanied the Doct[o]r & Sally, to Doct[o]r Read's meeting, where I heard a very agreeable discourse. Since I returned, I have read one of Blair's Sermons on the Sacrament, which is infinitely finer than any I ever heard delivered. This you will allow, is spending my time *rationally*, at least. Friday, we dined with Hetty Broom & (with Betsey Stockton) drank tea with Betsey Wilson. Mary Bassett set with us today at meeting. Mrs. Barker came here, to see me, while I was at Wethered's, but as she left Delaware the next day I did not see her. I believe I told you Mrs. Sam Wethered had lost a Son, & was very ill. She is now better, I believe.

Sunday 31 July 1803

My dear Child,—

I never have been possessed of a *black* Lace apron since you were born. A white, or one that once was white, I have and if I can meet with an opportunity of send[in]g it I will, as I have heard such can be dyed black and look extremely well. If this can be done at Wilmington you will have black lace enough to trim you from head to foot, as I shall send an apron, a cloak, w[hi]ch was once a beauty, and two pair of Ruffles that contain enough to make at least 15 pair of any you have yet seen worn. I must say I regret that black veils are the fashion for summer, as I fear they will injure the skin very much, but I suppose fashion must be comply'd with let what will be the consequence and I therefore shall wrap up yours very carefully and send it the first opport[unit]y.

I cannot help lamenting the death of Mrs. Dickinson. You know I have always lov'd her. She was one of the few friends I had in whose society I was always delighted and tho' for a great while past she has been from indisposition very much secluded from all her friends except those in her own house everybody hoped and expected she w[oul]d be restor'd again and

continue longer as a blessing to her family and all who had the pleasure of her acquaintance. When you see the family again, w[hi]ch I hope will be soon, and as often as you can, pray give my love to them. I most sincerely sympathise with them.

I have sent you one shift—in it is your veil. Harry tells me he is very sure Mr. McCombe will be kind enough to take up the small bundle I have to send and as he goes tomorrow I shall send it with this letter to Harry this Even[in]g.

Our neighbor James Barry died yesterday. He had been ill more than two weeks, and I believe there was not a person who knew him but wish'd for his recovery. His death is indeed an irreparable loss to his family. His whole cond[uc]t from the time of his arrival in this country, at w[hi]ch time he was a young Lord, has been very much superior to that generally observ'd among people of his station, and from his becoming the master of a family it has been truly exemplary for it seem'd to be his whole study to render all around him happy and respectable.

Say for me affectionately to Mrs. M., Miss B. and all our friends. God Almighty bless you my dear child

Your anxious and ever affectionate
Mother

[*To* Miss Ann Ridgely
at Dr. McKee's
near Wilmington
Delaware]

Friday 5th August, 1803

I am very sorry, my dear Child, to learn from your last letter that you were troubled with a pain and swelling in your face. I hope it is long before this time quite removed and to be informed by a letter tonight that you are again perfectly well and in good spirits.

Mary told me this morn[in]g that Captain White told her you took great liberties with Dr. T. and recommended several alterations ab[ou]t his house with as great ease and composure as if you expected to be really mistress of the mansion, and that he began to think you had absolutely determined if possible to make a conquest of your old friend. I am amazed at y[ou]r being so very saucy. I used to think you rather too silent when in

company. Perhaps too much liberty will spoil you and I must hurry Harry to bring you home. But at present I cannot tell when he will have time to leave home.

I am pleased to find you spent last Sunday in so rational a manner—and as you seemed pleased yourself with having kept one Sabath in a proper manner, I sincerely hope you may make it your study and delight to spend every one so. I wrote to you by Mr. Macombe so lately that I have now nothing to say but that I am well and that, as you request, I take great care of my health.

I this morn[in]g heard that poor Mrs. Barry and her youngest child were both very unwell.

Say for me to all our friends. Heaven bless you my dear child.

Your ever affectionate Mother
A. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely
at Dr. McKee's
near Wilmington
Delaware]

I was prevented writing to you yesterday, my dear Mother, first by attending Church, after that, by company all day. Hetty Broom, Sally Banning & myself spent Tuesday in the most friendly family way, at Doct[o]r Reads', in the Evening we all three, accompanied by Mr. Broom went out to Doct[o]r M'Kee's, where we found Caldwell, Vorheese & Stoops, the next morn[in]g we had the same gentlemen to set some hours with us; on Friday we came to Town, attended by Messrs. Macomb & Caldwell. We, Sally, Caldwell, Vorheese & I dined here, & with Mr. Broom & Col. Tilton added to those already mentioned, drank tea at Mrs. Wethered's. That night we all, save Tilton, slept here, Sally returned home on Saturday morning, I have been with Hetty ever since. This afternoon there is to be company at Doct[o]r M'Kee's. Maria Hun, Messrs C. & V. go together. To night I am to go, by engagement, to Bayard's to stay some days, I heard Price preach a sermon yesterday, which, had it been tolerably delivered, would have been very handsome, & moving. Mr. Broom spent the day in the Country, but before he went, invited Caldwell, who escorted us to church, to return & dine with us, which he did, & we passed a very pleasant

day. Vorheese came soon after dinner. I think Caldwell & Vorheese both extremely agreeable, I was scarcely ever more pleased with a stranger than with the latter, his countenance is the most pensive & most interesting I ever saw, his manners are very pleasing, altho' he is head & ears in love with Maria Hun, & I think the attachment mutual. I must haste to conclude this, lest the mail will be closed,

To Willy, Mary & Harry I must write this week, I am two letters in debt to each. My love to all my friends, Hetty also desires her best love to you &c. I am much obliged for the things you sent by Macomb.

Adieu my dear Mother
Ever your affect[iona]te
A R

Monday Morn[in]g
August 6th, 1803.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
near Dover
Delaware]

Prospect Hill
August 12th, 1803

My dear Mother.

I was agreeably surprised last Evening, by seeing my friend and favorite, Captain White, ride up to the door. He told me you were all quite well, but so offended with me, for not writing so frequently, or so concisely as you wished, that with all his eloqence he could not procure me a Letter. After tea & after White's departure we went to Brandywine to bathe, Kitty & I continued a long time in the water, it was so delightful I could have staid all night, but was obliged, most reluctantly, to leave it. I have not yet been to Bayard's, this afternoon I will spend with them, I am sure I should not like to stay there. Miss Ward is with them, & I do not admire her manners. I am to be at Doct[or] Read's with the Miss Wilson's a day or two, when I return to Doct[o]r M'Kee's where I am greatly pressed to return, and very anxious to be with Sally again, for indeed I dearly love her, she is so affectionate, and friendly, that it would be impossible to do otherwise. I came here on Tuesday morn[in]g intending to go to Bayard's in the aft'n. but was prevailed on to stay. I was with Mary Bassett several hours before I left Town, & promised to see her very soon again. I forgot to

tell you, I had my profile taken, 'tis the image of me, consequently too ugly to shew. All my friends here want one, but I will not leave one behind. I have a number of my acquaintance. The two Miss Wilson's, S.B., S.W., & K.W., H.B., T. Macomb, George Strawbridge & Vorheese. I was sorry I could not write by the latter, he was very polite in offering to take charge of any commands to Dover, and he is a very pleasing young man. I had a letter from Hester Driver last Even[in]g. I am much pleased with her stile, indeed she is a very agreeable girl.

Will you be so very good as to transcribe "Washington Hail" for me & send it by the next mail. I have promised it to an acquaintance, who is very desirous of it. You will find it in one of Willy's books, & do, pray send it soon.

I have also an other request to make, which believe me, my dear Mother, I do with the greatest reluctance. I am Ten Doll[ar]s. in Mrs. M'Kee's debt, nor have I sufficient money to pay for dying the things; & shoes &c. beside which, I really stand in great need of a good many things, & to be from home without money, is the most horrid thing on earth, if you can send me some, I should be ten thousand times obliged, for really I greatly want it. If you can conveniently get my large old gold ring, which is, I believe, in my work box, I should be very glad to have it.

I wish I had bro[ugh]t my blue sattin with me, & had it made, it would [be] a very handsome, fashionable & agreeable dress; I am constantly regretting I did not bring it. I hope you received the stockings by Doct[o]r McKee. I had not time to write, & as I had done it that day, by post, I tho't it unnecessary.

I must now, I believe, bid you Adieu, when I set down I expected to write a very long letter, but I have a very bad pain in my Eyes, and am just going to iron my silk stockings. Mrs. S. Wethered is expected here tomorrow, Kitty & Harriett are going in the carriage to meet her at George Town, where she is waiting for them.

Adieu, my dear Mother,
Believe me, as ever
Your most truly Affect[iona]te
AR

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
near Dover
Delaware]

In the foregoing letter Ann mentions Georgetown where the carriage was going. This is the old town in Maryland beautifully situated on the Sassafras River.

A convenient way to travel in early days, on going north from Maryland, was to sail across the Chesapeake Bay from Annapolis or Elk Ridge and up the Sassafras River to this town; then to ride or drive to one's destination.

The distance from Georgetown to Wilmington was about forty miles by Warwick and Middletown. An ancient inn at Georgetown, "The Kitty Knight House," is still a public inn. This fine old brick building stands on the bank above the river. It is possible that Mrs. Wethered was awaiting her friends at that old hostelry at the time of Ann's writing.

Monday 15th August, 1803

My dear Ann,

I have really been very much distressed ever since I received your letter of the 12th instant and do most sincerely wish you were at home again. Your imprudence in continuing in the bath at Brandywine so long as you did is almost unpardonable. Indeed, I cannot help saying that I discover, and that from your own letters, more thoughtless and giddy conduct about you than I ever expected to have found you capable of. I am wretched from the conclusion of your last letter, as you say, "I must now I believe bid you Adieu, when I set down I expected to write a very long letter, but I have a very bad pain in my eyes"—this pain I very naturally suppose was occasioned by staying so long in a cold bath to w[hi]ch you are totally unused. I rec[eive]d not a line since this account—you know my anxiety, and must, if you think of me at all, suppose I am now more than commonly desirous of hearing you are well, for I really dread that the pain you mention was the prelude to fever and sickness. Heaven grant that my fears may not be realized—I shall not go to bed this night before the arrival of the mail. I intended inclosing money in this letter but as your Brother Harry intends going to Wilmington in a day or two, I think it best to send it then. There certainly is a risk in inclosing bills which I would always rather guard against when it can be done and tho' you have taken the liberty (w[hi]ch I never yet did) of borrowing money, I know your kind creditor will excuse this delay, of a few days only, in my remittance to enable you to repay her.

I beg if you are well enough that you will call on all your kind friends in Wilmington before your return, and you may truly assure them that you are convinced I shall always think myself happy in every opportunity of returning the civilities you have received.

I must add that I cannot conceive how you have disposed of forty dollars since you left home unless you have bought new clothes, and I did not suppose more than one additional dress c[oul]d have been necessary at this time. However, make yourself perfectly easy about that matter and when Harry goes up, you shall have enough to pay off all. Say for me to all our friends, particularly Mrs. McKee and her family.

I rec[eive]d two pair of beautiful Stock[in]gs by Betsey Alston, but not a line, or a p[ai]r of shoes—indeed I am barefoot. Esther Corse dined here yesterday. She is very hearty and looks better than I ever saw her look before. She wished she s[ai]d very much to see you and appeared affectionate and clever in every respect.

Heaven bless you my very dear child!

Your ever anxious, affectionate Mother,

A. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely
at Doctor McKee's
near Wilmington
Delaware]

17th August, 1803

My dear Child,

I have this moment heard that your Brother Harry intends going to Wilmington tomorrow. When he may return it is very probable he w[oul]d not tell me if he c[oul]d, because you all know my anxious temper so well that you naturally enough suppose if you at any time overstay the hour in w[hi]ch I may expect you, it w[oul]d increase my uneasiness. I own this is the case, and that he is right in not setting a time to return—but indeed I now long to see you and shall be very much disappointed if I do not find you in good health and good spirits when you come home, for tho' when I wrote to you last I was very fearful that you were sick, the letter Mary rec[eive]d and sent out to me that same Even[in]g removed my fears and convinced me that you were, while you wrote it, quite well and very cheerful.

I shall inclose you a bank bill of Twenty Dollars. The shoes, stock[ing]s, muslin and patters of Chintz for a gowne will probably come to ten dollars or more. The remainder will, I hope, be sufficient to pay for all your own matters, and if it sh[oul]d not, you may apply to your Brother for I have not another bill, and I know he will not choose to carry more silver in his pocket than may be necessary to him on the road. I therefore desire you will if you sh[oul]d stand in need of more money ask him for it and I will settle the matter when he returns.

Mrs. Wilson and her daughter were here yesterday—the latter is going to Wilmington on Friday with her Husband and told me she hoped they sh[oul]d return at the time you w[oul]d as she sh[oul]d like to have company on the road. I hope some of your Wilmington friends will visit you after your return as I fear you will find it more lonesome than usual after so much gaiety as you have lately met with, but remember that it is the duty of every human creature to try to be happy in every situation and I am very sure that those who are wise enough to do so will at least find a satisfaction in their own minds that if it be not real happiness will approach very near it.

Since you left home I have now and then had company but have much oftener been quite alone. At first—for a few days only—this seemed particularly in the Even[in]gs and at night, a gloomy kind of life, but I can now truly say I begin to like it—not merely to be content in solitude—for solitude it is in reality—but I am pleased with it, and am determined you shall not stick at home as you used to do, but I will insist on your going abroad that I may enjoy the silence and the gloom I have learned to delight in. But do not suppose I w[oul]d wish to be always alone for that is very far from being the case. I always did, and I believe always shall, love the company of my friends, and I beg you will not forget to give my love to all I may be happy enough to have in Wilmington and tell them so.

Heaven bless you my dear child!

A. R.

Tell Mrs. McKee, I'm affraid she is tired of you—indeed you have been there a great while. Call on every friend before you leave Wilmington.

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely
at Dr. McKee's
near Wilmington]

August 21st 1803

It is utterly impossible, my dear Mother, to say how much I was hurt, on the reception of your last letter, by the mail. I was sick, & low spirited when I got it, and it added greatly to encrease my dejection. Sincerely did I regret ever leaving home. I believe I was never before accused of "thoughtlessness, & giddy conduct", a charge, from which my heart *fully* acquits me. Ask my friends here if I have been *wild*, or even *gay;* they will tell you that I am far, very far from either. Tho' I have seen a number of persons, my heart, mind and disposition are still the same. In your letter by Harry, you say you hope to see me well & cheerful; believe me, if I am not so, it will not be for want of exertion on my part, let me, my dear mother, find you so, and let me meet a kind reception. Worlds should not tempt me, voluntarily to displease you, I know I have many, very many faults, but not too great, I trust, to be pardoned. Harry arrived here on Friday noon, he is very well, and we talk of setting off on Wednesday, but do not look for us, 'till you see us. Sally is extremely anxious for me to stay till her marriage, which she solemnly assured me last night, would take place the middle of next month. Mrs. M'Kee says she cannot bear Sally should go to Kent at this season, tho' she prefers H. to any man in existence, and nothing on earth would give her so much pleasure as seeing them married, so says Sally, indeed *she* adds, that if she is not *his* wife, she will never marry. She has very often spoken to me on the subject, & of her love, or constancy, I have no more doubt, than of my own existence. I think, & hope you will love her. Her conduct to me has been that of an affectionate sister, and tho' she is not faultless, I know no girl, I would so soon chuse, as a wife for a belov'd Brother.

I spent a week, most agreeably at Bayard's, I am perfectly fascinated with the whole family, tho' I always *adored* Bayard, I never knew (comparatively speaking) anything of him, till now. He is ten thousand times more charming in his family than any where else. Monday Mr. & Mrs. B, Mary, Miss Ward, Miss Hun, & I drank tea with Hetty Broom, Tuesday, the same company added to Mrs. Strawbridge, the two Miss Evan's, Miss Stockton, Miss Banning, Mr. White, & Mr. T. Strawbridge, spent the Even[in]g by invitation, at Mr. Wethered's, then I was not at all pleased with Mrs. S.W. but I dined with them alone, on Friday, and thought her

very clever & agreeable. Wednesday we were all invited to Hun's, but that day I was too sick to set up at all, & only Mary, from Mr. Bayard's went.

Thursday, Mrs. B., Mary Bassett, Ann Ward, George Strawbridge, and myself, went to the Paper Mill, each of us made several sheets of Paper. The rocks & country about the Brandywine exceed for beauty anything I could ever form an idea of, indeed I should love to live near them, & cannot help wishing we resided in Wilmington, Mrs. Bayard has made me promise to use my eloquence with you, to induce you to move up, but when I get home I imagine I shall forget I ever made such an engagement. Eliza George & I, drank tea with Maria Dickinson on Thursday, I never saw either of them so agreeable or more cheerful. I spent an hour very pleasantly in the Even[in]g with Susan Hamilton, who is one of my greatest favorites. Yesterday morn[in]g we were shopping, & called at Miss Vining's, Miss G's, Broom's, & Bayard's. Tomorrow we spend the Even[in]g by invitation at Bayard's. This morn[in]g we were at Meeting, & heard a very good sermon, by a Mr. Collins, Doct[o]r Read was not at home. I have bought you a Chintz, very fine, & black, & I hope you will like it. I was at almost every shop in Town, before I could get it, such things are so scarce. Your shoes, I am almost sure, will not please you.

Tell Mary her silk is dyed a beautiful lead, or Dove colour. I wish I had one exactly like it.

Mrs. M'Kee, & all my friends in this place, have treated me with the truest kindness, and attention, and were I not flattered by their expressions of regret, at losing me, I should be an insensible being indeed.

Adieu my dear Mother.

Love to all. Yours most truly Affectionate

AR————

Sunday Afternoon.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
Eden Hill
Near Dover
Delaware]

During the winter of 1804 one of Ann's Wilmington friends, Kitty Wethered, wrote:

Prospect Hill, December 24th 1804

The receipt of my dear Ann's most welcome and affectionate letter afforded me more real pleasure than I can express; indeed I was much hurt at your long silence and could not in any way account for it. I ardently hope we may never again be so long without hearing from each other. I fully intended writing to you while we were in Maryland but was so constantly engaged as to render it impossible. We had a charming jaunt, and after staying nearly three weeks returned accompanied by brother P, and our amiable and entertaining friend Augusta Chambers. While they were here Wilmington was quite gay. There was a Party at Thomas Stockton's, one at Mrs. Travis', one at Mrs. Brook's and one here, which I think was pretty smart for this stupid place. Augusta was much admired for her lively disposition and engaging manners. I wish she could have staid the Winter with us but that was impossible and she left us Thursday week accompanied by Mama, brother P. Harriet and Caroline. Mama and the girls have not got home but we are in daily expectation of seeing them.

I thank you my dear Ann for your kind and pressing invitation to Eden Hill. Most gladly would I accept it was it in my power for indeed I almost long to be with you all. Be assured if an opportunity offers this Winter I will with the greatest pleasure embrace it. I am delighted to hear you intend up in May but I must insist on your making your home here. You must be sensible my dear girl. It has not been for want of inclination that I have not been to see you more frequently than I have.

It is impossible to say how much I rejoice to hear your sister Willy has so far recovered. Give my most sincere love to her and tell her I am almost crazy to see her.

This morning Mr. and Mrs. Dorsey came to Capt[ai]n Sword's where they will I suppose spend the winter. The girls, Ann and Louisa, have been there sometime. How sincerely I sympathize with them all. John was an only son and almost idolized by his family. He was a genteel handsome young man and one that I had a great friendship for. I dread seeing Mrs. Dorsey for she must, I think, be in the deepest affliction. Fortunately John had his miniature taken a few months since which his Mother has received. No doubt she esteems it as her greatest treasure. On Wednesday Capt[ai]n Sword and Ann Dorsey dined here. They both appeared to be very wretched; but enough of this melancholy subject.

George Sykes (who will be the bearer of this) arrived here on Saturday last. By him we heard that Sally was well. She was too much engaged to write. I intend giving her a severe reprimand in my next for her long silence.

Last week Matilda and myself called on Mrs. Broom and set an hour she is really a charming woman and one that I think I shall admire much. Hetty B. is dashing away charmingly in Washington she writes her father that it never was so gay as at present. I suppose we shall scarcely ever again see her Miss Broom.

We have lately had a visit from Gid Pearce and Kitty who staid several days there are great preparations making for Gid's wedding which is to take place next month I suppose you have heard who he is to marry but don't mention what I have told you, for tho' it is generally known they think it's a secret. We have no news in Town. It is at present as dull as it ever was. Mrs. Strawbridge is down. I am anxious to see her but fear it will not be in my power as the Horses are from home and the walking is so extremely bad.

I have lately had very pleasant dreams on wedding cake too if I could see you I would tell you them but it would take me an age to write them. The family have all retired I must therefore conclude much sooner than I wished present me in the most affectionate manner to your Mama and sisters and believe me yours sincerely and unalterably,

ANN C. WETHERED

Excuse all mistakes I have
not time to read it over.

[*To* Miss Ann Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

Wilmington, June 24, 1805

My dear Mother,

The receipt of your Letter by Thursday's mail gave me great satisfaction as I was extremely anxious to hear from home. I regret excessively that Willy did not get the silk by Harry, as it is very handsome and I was very particular in begging Betsey to send it. She told me the Evening before my Brother left here that it was carefully wrapt up and should cer-

tainly go by him. Since then I have never heard one word of it until I received my sister's Letter last Evening; but I will make it a point to inquire today if possible and entrust it to Betsey Cook who will return in a week, but as it is now raining and a most disagreeable day, I do not know what to do, and tomorrow I expect to set off for Philadelphia with Mrs. Bayard, who has, if possible, exceeded herself in kindness; she takes me to ride every day, makes me go to her house and will not suffer me to walk home, and as to Mrs. Brooks, if she were the most tender mother, she could not seek more to make me happy, well and comfortable. I do not wish to go tomorrow, as the Free Masons are to have a grand parade and I am desirous of seeing them. I am not anxious to visit P[hiladelphia] as I am so partial to this place that I could always be content to be here. I would give anything if we all lived in a delightful house which is nearly opposite to this, it is just large enough for your family, perfectly new and completely finished, two rooms on a floor, with excellent back buildings and a nice little yard and flower garden. Indeed, I am captivated with the house and situation all together. This part of the Town is by far the most pleasant. Yesterday I spent the day at Doct[o]r Read's. 'Tis the first time I have seen them. The Doct[o]r did not know me, even when I spoke. He says he never saw any person so much altered. Betsey Wilson says I am thinner everytime she sees me. . . .

Betsey Wilson and I rode out to Doct[o]r McKee's yesterday morning and took C[harles] George to ride and sat an hour or two with them. Sally and all the family are well and the child as lovely as ever. Today I was to have spent with them, but it rains violently.

I walked to see Miss Vining last Evening and found her quite well. I intended writing last night. I was then in the humor but after I came home the Wethered's were here and when they went away, Horsey, Collins and Hamilton came, and stayed 'till bed time, and I was so much fatigued by the exercise of the day that I could not write.

I have got a dress of the same mantua as Willy's, which I shall have made in Philad[elph]ia. Miss Milligan has just come from there, and says she did not see a lady in the City with a trail. I shall be pleased if I find it so as I dislike long clothes.

You will, I know, excuse a short letter as it injures my health to write long ones.

All your acquaintance here send love.

Mr. Dickinson came to see me again yesterday and insists on my going there when I return from Philad[elph]ia. He says I shall have a room and a maid to myself and visit Dover when I please, but not to stay long as he means me to be his guest until my health is thoroughly re-established.

Tell Sally I miss her at my feet excessively. They would often be better for a rubbing, when they ache and burn.

Give my love to all my family and friends if I have any.

Adieu my dear Mother,
Most sincerely your
A. R.

Charity told me the silk was sent by Friday's mail. I hope it is arrived safe. Do write and let me know. Direct to me as usual, as I think it highly probable Mrs. Bayard will not go at all, at any rate not so soon.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
near Dover
Delaware]

Most of Ann's mother's money was invested in Philadelphia, and her great nephew, Tom Cadwalader, was her business agent. In the following letter of July, 1805, Ann was visiting her Aunt Bond, her mother's sister. Her health was greatly impaired.

There is an expression, at the end of this letter, which is used frequently in many of the letters of the early nineteenth century and up to 1849: "Say for me affectionately to all my relations, etc."

Philadelphia, July 1, 1805.

It was my intention, my dear Willy, to have answered your several letters previous to my leaving Wilmington, but for some days before my departure I was not well enough to do anything whatever. I set off yesterday morning about nine o'clock and got here about six, after the most fatiguing ride I ever had. Today I feel better than I expected and I hope a short time will add much to my health. Nothing could be more affectionate than the reception I met with. All my friends express great pleasure at having me

with them. They are all well, and Mr. B[ond] the same fine agreeable being I always so much admired.

I wrote to Aunt on Thursday to let her know I would be up soon and I found everything prepared for me.

Tom Cadwalader came this morning to see me, he was very clever; and says his wife will be here this Evening. Tell Mama I have got fifty Dollars from Tom Cad. I shall not want many things myself, but at Wilmington I have Doct[o]r Monroe's bill to pay, but that I should suppose will not be much.

Jane Rowan knew me as I passed her in the street yesterday. She followed the carriage and was the first person I saw upon stopping. Martha walked up in the Evening and Bell and Jane came this morning. They all behaved with the greatest affection. I have promised if I can to spend Wednesday with them.

I am anxious to get into the Country, the noise of the City is very disagreeable. I hope you have received your silk as Mr. McLane interested himself about it and I believe he seldom fails of success on such occasions. I understood he forgot it 'till he was at the ferry and then came back for it and got it.

I wished to have given you a description of the Masonic procession I was at this day week, but it fatigued me so much that I was fearful of going thro' it again, even on paper. The instrumental music was enchanting beyond anything I ever heard, the mason's farewell was enough to have captivated any human being but the singing was tormenting to the last degree, nor was I much pleased either with the Orator or the Oration, he spoke handsomely of Washington, but who could speak otherwise?

Aunt has just sent me word she has a message for Mama if I am writing home. I must then leave room for it. I have been writing for Mr. Bond, he told me he marked me down when he saw my letter to his Mother. He says I have the hand for a clerk. We are to ride this afternoon, and tomorrow spend the day in the country. I hope I shall get my gown made in a day or two, by a French woman, who they say excells Short Sleeves are not worn even in the full dress, or in any dress of course mine will be long, catacornered with a drawing a little below the shoulder, and another at the wrist.

I am afraid Mama has been uneasy at not hearing from me by the last mail. I wish much she would write, I shall be very unhappy if I do not hear from her very soon.

Say for me affectionately to all my relations, and kindly to all others whom it may concern.

Adieu my dear Willy
Let me hear very often and believe
me your very affectionately
A. R.

All here send a great
deal of love.

[*Addressed to* Miss Ridgely
near Dover
Delaware]

Philad[elph]ia July 1805

White & Horsey called this morning to let me know they are going to Dover, and were so very urgent for me to write that I will attempt a letter, tho' I have but a short time, as they go at 3, & 'tis now very near two. If you could possibly conceive, my dear Mother, how *very* wretched I am at not hearing from you, you would not keep me in this dreadful state of suspense; not one line have I received since you knew I was here, and if I do not get a letter today I shall be almost crazy. For God's sake write to me while I am absent, which I hope & trust will not be long. I regret extremely not having returned with Doct[o]r Horsey, as he would have been kind & attentive, & probably I shall not meet with so agreeable a companion.

Betsey Wilson was to see me this morn[in]g. She does not expect to go home before next week, if then, but has promised to let me know. I have every kind attention paid me now, and a black girl to wait on me who, for goodness and affection exceeds anything I ever had an idea of.

Poor little W. Travis has been very sick, she had a fit on Sunday night. I was to have dined with Mrs. T. on Monday, but it was too hot. Tom Cad. & his wife are here almost every evening, I think her a sweet engaging woman, to day if I can, I intend to drink tea with her. They came on Monday & prest me excessively to go home with them, but I was not well enough. I was never so much pleased with Mrs. Travis, I now think her by far the most agreeable of the family, her manners are greatly changed towards *me*, but her whims & capers respecting her children & servants &c. are still the same.

I am very sorry Sally Ridgely sent by Betsey Wilson for a hat for the child, as I told her positively the night before I left Wilmington that *I* would get him one. That I sent is very fashionable, & I think pretty, and I made the dear little dog a present of it. Give my love to all.

Aunt &c &c, send a great deal. Do, I implore you write, & do not be uneasy about me.

Adieu my D[ea]r. Mother

Your most truly affect[ionate]

AR

Thursday

Germantown, August 5th, 1805

My dear Mother,

I was quite unconscious how long it had been since I had written until reminded of it by Miss B[ond] who wrote last Evening. . . I am now under Dr. Wistar's hands. I hope I shall soon be well, his prescriptions have already had a good effect, as I am much better today, and I am sure there is nothing on earth wanting to make me comfortable or happy. I have not a single wish ungratified that it is in the power of my friends to grant. I ask for everything I want and it is instantly got. I wished the other day for a WaterMelon and a CocoaNut. The melon was directly purchased before the door, and cousin Becky went to Philadelphia for the nut, without my having the smallest suspicion. It is the finest nut I ever saw.

Mr. Bond has just heard that "The London Packet, Captain MacDougal" arrived in 23 days. There is a ship coming in by which they expect Letters. I had quite a long and an affectionate letter from Matilda Dorsey last night. She staid two weeks at Chestertown and after all went home without Mrs. Cox and Miss Richards.

I wish Sally Ridgely would write me what sort of a bonnet she chuses. At any rate, I shall go to Town as soon as possible and get the prettiest I can meet with and have it already to send by the first opportunity.

If you want the greatest bargain in Dimity that I ever heard of you can get it now. Dimity as white as snow and as fine as almost any petticoat I have at two shillings and nine pence.

I shall be obliged to get more money of Tom Cadwalader as I have now very little left, and as this is the last visit I shall ever pay to Philadelphia—at any rate if I live single, there are several little comforts and conveniences

I wish much to have. The silk coats have not yet come from France. I, of course, have not got one if they do not come while I am here, I will leave money with Miss B. I would wish you to say how much more money you think I should have—consider all things—my Indisposition, and the few indulgences I have had of this kind.

The Cadwaladers, with their lovely little Boy, spent yesterday week with us. In my life I never saw a finer child and he is very pretty. His eyes are a beautiful black, but he is brown and very sallow. I can really scarce look upon them in any other light but as a Brother and Sister—their conduct is so tender and affectionate.

Aunt and all the family desire a great deal of love to you all. I implore you not to be uneasy at not hearing from me every week.

Adieu my dear Mother

Give my love to all the family

Believe me

Your ever affectionate

A. R.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Ridgely
near Dover
Delaware]

The child described here was a son of Thomas Cadwalader and Mary Biddle, his wife.

This letter, dated Germantown, August 5th, 1805, is the last we have from young Ann Ridgely. Phineas Bond's report to her brother Henry of her approaching death proved true.

German Town 25 August 1805

My dear Sir

The letters, written lately, from hence to Dover, must have prepared you for an Event, which will involve you all in extreme affliction—but which is inevitable.

For the last 24 hours your excellent Sister Ann has changed, perceptibly, for the worse: during the whole of the last night, she was restless, flighty, faultering in her voice, with every Indication of approaching Dissolution.

During the whole of this day her strength has palpably declined, and a few hours must put an end to her valuable life.

You may, naturally, conceive what a scene of misery and woe is before us. Your affectionate mother and Miss Ridgely, in the unabating attention they have paid to poor Ann, seem to have forgot themselves, but when their exertions shall cease, they will, I fear, discover they have done more than they were competent to perform.

Comfort those about you, and dispense to them all the condolence we can offer and all the sympathy we can afford, upon this melancholy occasion.

God bless you my dear Sir,

With infinite affection, I am y[ou]rs most faithfully,

P. Bond

[*Addressed to* Henry Moore Ridgely, Esqr.
Dover
Kent
Delaware]

In October Thomas Cadwalader, Ann's Cousin, who had taken charge of her funeral and ordered the grave stone, wrote in regard to the inscription, to her brother Henry Ridgely.

Ann was interred in the burying ground of old Christ Church at Second and Arch Streets, Philadelphia.

Philad[elphi]a 19. Oct. 1805

My dear Sir,

Feeling apprehensive that the inscription for your Sister's tomb, may not arrive in time to have it compleated before the frost sets in, I beg the favor of you to send it to me as soon as possible.

I regretted very much that we missed each other when you were in this part of the Country.

Remember me to Mrs. R[idgely] to your Mother & Sisters, & believe me your

Aff[ectionat]e friend & kinsman

Thos. Cadwalader

H. Ridgely Esq.

Philadelphia 7 Nov. 1805

My dear Madam.

As soon as I received the Inscription sent in Harry's Letter of the 23d. of October, I lost no time in causing to be compleated the mournful duty which you assigned to me. Everything has been done, under my immediate eye, and, you may be assured, in the very best manner.

We were very sorry to hear of Willy's sickness. When you write, pray say, particularly how she is.

Mary desires to be presented to you, in the most affectionate terms; and she joins me in love to Willy, & to her namesake.

We, a few days since, received Letters, from my Mother, as late as the 6 of Sept:—who was perfectly well.

Believe me, my dear Madam,

With real respect & affection

Your ob[edient] Ser[van]t,

THOS. CADWALADER

To Mrs. Ridgely

Letters of The Ridgely Family

1803 - 1850

THE letters in this section date approximately from 1803 to 1850, but a few later ones are added. These explain the finding of the hoard of letters in the loft of the old house by Ann Ridgely du Pont, the attachment of the family to the old farm and the house on the Green, or contain some genealogical items considered pertinent to what had gone before.

Henry Ridgely's letters as a schoolboy are in preceding chapters with those of his younger brother, George Wemyss Ridgely. Never were two brothers more unlike each other. The difference in their temperament as boys was apparent, and it became ever more so as they grew toward manhood.

George, his mother's "dear little sloven," careless, ill-lettered, affectionate, was devoted to his relatives, absorbed in his horse and dogs, a little friend of all the world, but quite unable to acquire an education.

Henry, on the other hand, was serious, introspective and studious. His school records show him to have been an apt and devoted pupil. He was dignified in person and address, and never unconscious that he was, in fact, the head of his family circle. He looked up to his older half-brother, Nicholas, who was his father's heir, but he was conscious that the rôle of head of the family at Eden Hill was his, so long as his mother lived. Sometimes, his serious consideration of himself as an important young man is comical, unless we keep in mind how really young he was, and how revered by his mother and sisters.

It is entirely out of the picture to associate him with dueling, yet it is as a duelist that we first meet him in the period of his young manhood.

There was a quarrel, the nature of which we do not know, between Dr. Barrett, a young physician of Dover, and William Shields of New Castle. Henry consented to be the bearer of a challenge from the Dover doctor to Mr. Shields. William Shields refused to "meet" Dr. Barrett, but in his turn challenged Ridgely. The duel was fought with pistols April 20th, 1803, in Wilmington, and Shields drew Ridgely's blood. The wound was in the arm and slight. It seemed, however, to

satisfy all parties and, with the flow of blood, the heated brains of Barrett, Shields, and Ridgely cooled off. The news came quickly to Dover, as will be seen from the following letters from Henry's sisters at Eden Hill, and from his neighbor, Thomas Clayton.

From Ann Ridgely to her brother. April 21st 1803
Thursday Morn[in]g

Although I once made a solemn vow never more to write to you, my dear Harry, I find, that, like many other rash resolutions I have in my life formed, I feel inclined to break it and, as a bad promise is ever "more honored in the breach than the observance" I have seated myself with the hope of obtaining by scribbling to you, that amusement which I have in vain sought for, in a variety of employments. Really since I heard of your late affair with Shields, I have been almost dying with a sick headache.

Brother Nick came down early yesterday afternoon, on purpose to inform us of the Duel, of which he heard at Duck Creek, about 12 o'clock. We were all (as you will readily imagine) greatly alarmed, tho' we had the account exactly as Mr. Bayard, and Rogers stated. Yet, as the Female Heart is ever, when attached, anxious, and alive to every feeling, bodily or mental of those it loves, we feared instead of being exaggerated the account was softened and that your wound was much worse than we were informed.

Brother went to Town to inquire if Doct[o]r Horsey, or any other person there, could give more particular information—but all accounts corresponding, he determined to await at home, the arrival of the mail and if you did not come, (of which he entertained a faint hope) to set off immediately for Wilmington. He said he approved your conduct in every particular, except in not sending an express to prevent unnecessary alarm.

You know he is always, on such occasions, extremely kind and attentive nor did I ever see him more interested, or tender, than on the present. He entreated Mama to send to him the moment a Letter, or any intelligence came, accordingly Mary's Letters and several for himself were dispatched at twelve o'clock last night. Mr. Truitt intended to go today, on purpose to see you; and Doct[o]r Horsey had not his letters from his Brother, and Rogers, been perfectly satisfactory would have gone off in the stage. In-

deed every person of your acquaintance has acted with the greatest attention, particularly the Doct[o]r and Mrs. Sykes and Doct[o]r Horsey.

Tho' I think the cause of the Challenge & Duel, silly enough, yet, I rejoice, as you were challenged, that you fought, for I would ten thousand times rather see every being I hold dear on Earth, laid in their graves, than branded with the odious appelation of Cowardice. It has ever been to me, of all epithets on earth, the most degrading and insupportable. In my opinion, a person wanting Courage, wants every other virtue, or at least, no other virtue can, in any degree, compensate for it. But I will here dismiss the subject, having, perhaps, said too much already, for myself, yet it will give you pleasure, I am sure, to hear that Mama, tho' in the greatest distress about your arm, expressed much less disapprobation of your conduct than I could have believed, as you know she always held Duelling in abhorrence. She bids me say she laments that a son of hers, should so far forget the lessons she has strove to inculcate, as to act in a manner so derogatory to the character of a Christian. This is her message and these are her sentiments on the subject. Mary was here yesterday when brother mentioned the circumstance, & again this morning. She says she shall duly acknowledge the letters of Mrs. B. & Rogers by the next mail. I sincerely wish you were at home, tho' I would not, for the world, have you attempt to come while the slightest danger can be apprehended, and I am sure nothing will be neglected on the part of any of our friends in Wilmington, which can be proper for you, or aid to your comfort.

On Sunday, I hope we shall be gratified by seeing you, however, we shall certainly hear from or of you by tomorrow's mail, and on Monday too, if you do not return by then. Remember our anxiety and if you cannot write yourself, surely you can get someone else to do it. Fisher put off his nuptials (which were, you recollect, to have taken place on Tuesday) on account of your absence, & said he could not possibly be married until you return, but since he knew you were hurt, he has determined to be united this even[in]g and Doct[o]r Horsey stands in your stead. The reason he gave to Doct[o]r Horsey for waiting for you was, I think, rather farcical, . . . He averred that it would be a want of good breeding & Etiquette, if, as I was to wait on the Bride, he had anybody but you, for Groomsman! did you ever?

Mrs. W. has just sent to remind me of my engagement, & to beg I would

attend this even[in]g. I really have not spirits fit for a wedding nor am I at all well, but Brother N. entreated yesterday that I would not fail to go, & Mama is extremely desirous I should comply, consequently I must make this small sacrifice of my own ease, for a few hours. Tonight, I stay at your house, & will, if possible get little Mary to keep Mama company. We were inform'd today that you went yesterday to stay at Doct[o]r McKee's. Do pray let us know whether you are there still or at Mr. Bayard's.

Tomorrow, if possible, I will tell you all about the wedding, at present I must conclude. For God sake, my dear Harry, take care of yourself, and take care of poor Cub too. Be punctual in writing. And believe me ever your unalterably affectionate

AR

Perhaps the reader remembers that "Cub" had been George Ridgely's horse.

Friday Aft[ernoo]n

As Doct[o]r Horsey has thoughts of setting off for Wilmington in the morn[in]g I have promised to send this to him this Even[in]g & if he does not he will put it in the mail. We are extremely anxious to hear from you, & if disappointed tonight you know what we shall suffer. Horsey talks of staying with you til you can return with safety, which I most ardently hope will be very soon.

I promised to tell you something about the Wedding, but can say little more than that it was infinitely more agreeable than I could have imagined; the Bride behav'd extremely well, & with the utmost composure & calmness notwithstanding the groom was so agitated as to be obliged to sit down & fan himself when he came to hand her down. I believe there was never a greater fool, or more awkward creature to stand up for a Bridesmaid, than I. However I must be excused on the score of ignorance, never having been at a wedding since I was ten years old, nor was the Groomsman much better, but he has the same apology as myself. Betsey will see no company before you return, as, until that period, I cannot possibly attend her. Brother & Sister Ridgely are outrageous at you for fighting—you may expect a pretty severe lecture from them—Sister particularly. She scolded me very much for approving of it. Sally Clayton too, expresses great disapprobation, but tis of no consequence.

Your mother desires her tenderest love, mine also, receive. I long to know exactly your situation. I cannot help distrusting the accounts I have heard.

Adieu, my dear Harry
Ever your
AR

April 22nd

[*Addressed to* Henry M. Ridgely, Esq.
Wilmington
Delaware]

There are several allusions in the foregoing letters that should be explained.

"Brother Nick" or Nicholas Ridgely, the eldest son of Charles Ridgely's first marriage, was living at this time on a farm, "Somerville," which he had bought, on the road from Dover to Kenton and Duck Creek. He rode down to Dover when the news of Henry's duel reached him in order to save the boy's mother and sisters unnecessary anxiety.

Doctor Horsey's name appears frequently in the letters of Mary Ridgely in the early eighteen hundreds. Several of the Horsey family are mentioned. Outerbridge Horsey and James A. Bayard were the U. S. Senators from Delaware at the time Henry Moore Ridgely was sent to Congress in 1811 and 1813. They belonged to the same "mess" at the Capital.

The Fisher whose nuptials were postponed was John, afterwards U. S. District Judge, who was marrying Elizabeth Wilson, niece of Caesar Rodney. Toward the end of the letter Ann explained that John Fisher's bride, Betsey, "will see no company" for the present, because Ann could not attend her, due to her anxiety as to the outcome of the duel. It was the custom at that time for a bridesmaid to continue her services to the bride during the early days of the honeymoon. Mr. Fisher brought his bride to the house at the southwest corner of the Green, where Chief Justice Comegys later lived. It is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Maxon Terry.

Dr. McKee, to whose house Henry Ridgely was removed after the

duel, was a surgeon from Glasgow, Scotland. He had married Elizabeth, née Alford, the widow of John Banning of Dover and mother of the "charming Sally," afterwards Mrs. Henry Moore Ridgely.

The "brother and sister" who scolded were Abraham Ridgely and his wife, Hetty. Abraham's voice was frequently the voice of the minority and usually tuned to a discordant note. At least, it was not pitched to the key of the family concert numbers. It appears, however, that the sharp breach existing between him and his stepmother in 1799-1800 had, by this time, been at least partially healed.

When news of the duel reached Dover, Mary Ridgely also wrote promptly to her brother.

Apr. 23 [1803]

Ann I find has written to you, and no doubt has in a much better manner than I can do, informed you of the sentiments of all your friends on the disagreeable affair which has lately taken place, and as you already know mine I need not mention them. Let me my dear Harry caution you against any kind of exercise which can possibly be injurious to you, remember, by venturing to ride too soon you may make yourself ill and endanger your life by a fever, pray be cautious. The Mail has this moment come, and Doct[o]r Horsey (who is the kindest of all human beings) has gone down to get whatever letters there are for us, the contents of them will determine whether or not he goes up Tomorrow, and me also, for if you are ill I will go. Yet I flatter myself there will be no necessity of anybody's going. I must close & seal my letter, or shall be disappointed of getting it in the Mail. Once more let me caution you—remember, how very wretched we all are, and try and get well as fast as you can. In Mr. Rogers and Doct[o]r Horsey you have two of the best friends on Earth—and many more very good ones.

Adieu
and that I may soon see you
quite well is the wish
of your affec[tiona]te Sister
M.R.

[*Addressed to* H. M. Ridgely, Esquire
Wilmington
Delaware]

A friend, Thomas Clayton, told the young duelist of the amazement and concern of his acquaintances in Dover.

Dear Harry

We received here with considerable surprise the intelligence of your encounter with Shields. After the object for which you left this town was generally known, I predicted the probability of a rupture between you and Tilton; but such a thing with Shields never entered into my head. The first tidings of the duel were brought to this place by Peter Stout; and as it is well known that he possesses a fertile fancy, we were willing to allow a great deal on that score; especially as he knew so little of the particulars, and what he pretended to know was so improbable that he was scarcely to be credited—you were the challenger, and fought behind the poorhouse, and he knew not who was your second or whether you had any. We were for some time apprehensive that your wound might be worse than was represented; but we are glad to hear that the bone is not broken; and I hope you will shortly be able to come down. However, I suppose you are happy in your quarters. You have read, no doubt the story of William and Jeanette—I do not mean to apply the *whole* of that to your case—and as it is not certain when you will be willing to leave your quarters I should like to hear from you whether you are there. May we expect that you will be able to try any causes this term? If not, where you are solely concerned, I presume it will not be necessary to summon the witnesses.

Fisher was married on Thursday night last to Miss Wilson. It has been remarked that when one wedding takes place in this town it is followed by a number of others.

Do you like the tardiness of Dr. Barrett? His friends expected that he would have been in Wilmington before this time.

Adieu

TH[OMA]S CLAYTON

H. M. Ridgely, Esqr.
Dover 25th. April, 1803

The story of William and Jeannette no doubt was the history of a wounded hero tenderly cared for by a sweetheart. That, we suppose, was the situation that developed at Dr. McKee's, after Henry was taken there following the duel.

The daughter of the house, Sally Banning, was, we suppose, the ministering angel. Henry had been courting her for several months, but his suit was not progressing to his taste. The lady, but newly promoted from the schoolroom to the parlor, was not eager to assume the responsibilities of matrimony.

When Sally first came to Dover as a child, she was mentioned by Henry's mother with praise. Ann described her as very pretty and with unusually lovely manners. Later she had been sent to Mrs. Capron's School in Philadelphia where she received "A Reward of Merit" for a sketch in water color; a Clementi harpsichord had been brought from London for her use; she had been taught to play sonatas, and had acquired other accomplishments; with devoted parents and the attentions paid to an attractive young lady, she was well content.

The following letters show how ardently Henry had to plead before his lovely Sally yielded.

At last she wrote, "As I have promised so I must perform. I leave you to your will and I to my fate"! The record of this courtship opens with the rough draught of a chiding message from Henry. It lacks both salutation and signature, and may never have actually been sent, but the writer was enough in earnest to preserve it.

Dover 4th. Sept. 1802

From what passed at our last interview, I am constrained to believe, that it is a virtual refusal on your part, any longer, to receive my addresses; and that you consider me, only in the light of an indifferent person, for whom you have not the least affection.

. . . you told me that you wished not to be married immediately; but at the same time you unequivocally fixed on next August as the period at which you would consent that our marriage should be solemnized. With much reluctance I acquiesced in this postponement of my happiness, still fondly flattering myself, from the manner in which I had been received, that I was the object of your love—But oh God! how were my hopes dash'd at our last meeting, with the bitter cup of disappointment! I felt all the anguish that disappointed love can possibly feel, when you declared to me that it was only in compliance with your mother's wishes, that you had en-

gaged yourself to me—That you were sorry for what you had done—That you could not be happy, if you were to marry me at the time appointed. That you wished—but I will proceed no further. You know all that happened, and to me the recollection alone is a source of sufficient pain!

'Tis true that just before we parted you gave me to understand, that I need not consider our engagement as entirely at an end. But when I recollect that you mentioned no time for our marriage, but expressed your self equivocally by saying, if you loved me you would consent at some distant period—that you refused to acknowledge that I possessed any share of your attachment—that you laid your commands on me not to visit you—and as if to rid yourself of the trouble of hearing me, that you quitted the room and did not return. Would a woman refuse to receive the visits of a man whom she loved? would she deny to the person to whom she was engaged, the happiness of letting him know, he possessed her affection, if such were the fact? Could such an acknowledgement be a sacrifice to her feelings!

Would to God, my beloved Sally, that I could be assured I am wrong in my opinion! Quickly would I forget every disagreeable circumstance that has happened, and willingly fly to receive the hand of the woman, whom I love with a zeal almost akin to adoration.

If I possess the place in your affections that I once had cause to think I held, I implore you not to refuse to write to me upon the receipt of this letter. Your silence will incontestibly prove that my fears have not been without foundation, and be to me the sad assurance, that it is, at present, your intention, never to consent to our marriage.

Dover 31st March 1803

You promised, my dear Sally, to correspond with me. I therefore, avail myself of the permission granted, to begin the correspondence. Indeed, from that source will be derived most of the pleasure I can at present have, being deprived of the happiness of seeing and conversing with you as often as I could wish. And you, I hope will not refuse, to grant me often that pleasure.

Under a solemn engagement to the loveliest of her sex to a woman who is the object of my purest, my most sincere attachment—can it be won-

derful, if in these circumstance, the chief delight of life should consist in anticipation—in anticipation too, resting on the high idea that I have of her constancy, arising from the exalted opinion I possess of her worth and her loveliness? And steril, indeed, must be the imagination, that cannot, in my situation, look forward to the most unbounded bliss—to a happiness in reserve, that renders life most exquisitely desirable! but oh the disappointment of which, wretchedness awaits in its most horrid forms. If then the mind can fancy to itself such pleasure—how delightful—how more than rapturous would it be to realize?

I have always, my lovely girl, pictured to myself, in glowing colours, the delights of a married life, where there existed a mutual attachment and a desire in each party to please the other. 'Tis in this State alone we can, this side of Heaven, taste the purest happiness in the highest degree, unmixt with sordid interest and unsocial joys. United with you, it would be my lot to experience that bliss.

Part of the story is supplied by a letter Sally wrote from Wilmington to Henry's sister, Ann Ridgely.

I can scarce my dear Girl find an excuse adequate for my long neglect in writing. Several times I have had my pen in my hand intending to begin a letter to you, but have every time been disturbed by company. We have had a great deal since our arrival, more I suppose than we shall have again, and indeed it is not vastly agreeable to me to be constantly engaged in such a routine. This week we have had the pleasure of enjoying E. Wilson's company in Wilmington. She is extremely anxious to see Dover, and I fear if Mr. Rodney does not meet with an opportunity of sending her down, she will really get sick, for I never knew one pine and sigh as much as she does.

You reproached me in yours my dear Ann for want of confidence to you, but at the same time declared it was a too delicate subject for you to broach. If to you so much so, how much greater to me, who is so much nearer concerned. My dear Girl I could never speak on this subject to my Mother even without the greatest diffidence, and always endeavoured as much as possible to evade it. How much more so then, must I of course feel while

writing to you about it. And to speak candidly do you not think I am too young to enter in such an engagement; nor have I prudence and knowledge sufficient, for in my opinion it requires much of both. When I first fixed on the time, believe me, I did not consider what an important thing I was about, and since I have reflected seriously, the more I am convinced of my own incapacity. To consent to an earlier period than August is impossible on account of many reasons, and at that time just at the commencement of the unhealthy season to leave a healthy country and go to Kent would not be proper, I don't think, as I never enjoyed my health perfectly there before last season. I have much more to say on this subject to you in another letter, but think at present I have proceeded far enough. I shall expect an answer sometime this week from you my dear girl, and believe me it will be one of the greatest source of pleasure I can receive in reading your agreeable letters; and I should have answered yours sooner, had it not lain in the post office a week before I received it. S. and Matilda Wethered drank tea with me the other evening, the latter informed me she had a letter on hand then to you, which she intended sending down by E. Wilson. Kitty has returned from Philadelphia. I have not seen her yet. I am told she does not look so well as she did before she went to Town.

My dear Ann excuse the brevity of this as you know I never write long letters; but let me renew my persuasions before I finish, to entreat you would accompany your brother to Wilmington in May. You cannot conceive what infinite pleasure it would give your friends to see you, and why not gratify them, when you can do it so easily.

Excuse my hurried epistle, it is almost dark, and I am obliged to send it to the office tonight. Mama and the family join me in sincere love to your Mama and self.

Adieu dear Girl
And believe me I am your sincere
S. Banning

April 15th, 1803

[*To* Miss Ann Ridgely
near Dover]

There follows a considerable correspondence between the young couple.

From Sally:

Wilmington April 19th 1803

In compliance with your request I take up my pen with some diffidence I must confess to continue correspondence with you, it is not surprizing indeed that I should feel in a degree abashed writing to one of your sex the first time; nor never was I more at a loss for a subject before.

The time you appear so anxious for our marriage to take place I cannot consent to, many circumstances conspire against it; one is, I conceive it ungrateful to leave Mama so soon after our moving to Wilmington, when it was partly on my account she consented to such a change, her reluctance was very great at leaving Kent and how much more would it be encreased remaining from it, if separated from me. And I may add, if we were inclined to return to Kent, it would be impossible this some time yet to do so. I flatter myself you will never more insist upon a thing after this, which is so contrary to my wishes, and which is very disagreeable to me, to refuse so often. Had we remained in Kent it was probable I might have acceeded to any time you would have wished; our moving has altered my intentions entirely. You must excuse me if my letter is very short, and extremely dull, for this day wears very much the appearance of the latter, and disagreeable weather operates disagreeably on my spirits. Mama and Charity unite in sending their best respects to you, and are much indebted to you, for the friendly attention you shewed to the latter when she was departing from Dover.

And believe me, my dear Sir,
I am yours sincerely,
S. Banning

[*Addressed to* Henry M. Ridgely
Dover]

This to Sally, unsigned, but in Henry's unmistakable hand:

Dover 3d July 1803

To contemplate your charms, to call to my remembrance the many happy moments I have past in your company, and to look forward to the period when you will become the partner of my tenderest, dearest joys,

constitute at present, my charming Sally, almost the whole of my happiness. A happiness too lightened by the pleasure of your correspondence, tho' at the same time, not complete or unmixt with anxiety. Ask you the cause why it is imperfect? The answer is: That our marriage alone can be a consummation of my happiness, and to a man who loves as truly and ardently, as I do, any, the slightest thing will awaken his fears and render him uneasy tho blest with a mutual return of love. Not my dearest girl, that I question in the least your constancy far be the idea from me, were that the case, my regard for you could not be so high as it is. But when the mind of man is anxiously striving to gain a prize of worth, his happiness can only be complete in the attainment of the beloved object.

My happiness, Oh God! would be indeed complete & exquisitely great in receiving your hand in marriage. Believe, for I speak in the sincerity of my heart, it is the fondest wish of my soul. You have promised that my wish shall be gratified. My dear Sally, let me beg of you most earnestly to hasten the happy period. In return I engage to you the most affectionate attention and the fondest love, the kindest assiduities and the most tender indulgences. Let not "gloomy care" nor the want of resolution postpone our marriage longer than November as the utmost period. At that time . . . do consent to receive the hand of a man whose heart has been long devoted to you most affectionately, and who by his conduct will endeavour through life to merit your affectionate regards and kindest wishes. Our house shall be the abode of happiness and "sweet smiling peace shall crown our dwelling." In the meantime write frequently and believe

My dear Sally,

Yours with the utmost sincerity,

July 12th 1803

My dear Sir,

I will now convince you by the readiness I answer your letter which I received inclosed in one to your Sister Ann, of my intention to be a faithful correspondent as I promis'd; tho perhaps no person loves better to receive letters from those they esteem more than I do, yet no one can have a greater aversion to writing than me, and it is almost a task to take pen in my hand to write to my dearest friends, and when I finish a letter; it is

quite a relief. I hope you will pardon my conduct, for I intend by practice if possible to surmount my dislike for writing, it is certainly a most useful accomplishment, and every person ought to endeavour to attain perfection in it. I often reflect on my self for my misbehaviour walking on the Brandywine with you, it arose entirely from giddiness, and I should not have thought of it again, had I not been reminded, so little did I think I was misbehaving, Mr. Broom gave me a serious lecture about it, and said I should be more cautious, advice I hope I may avail myself of for the future.

Your Sister Ann appears quite contented, and you need not come up for her this some time yet, I shall do all in my power to render her situation happy while she is with us, for she always was a favourite of mine, and her Wilmington friends wish to retain her as long as possible.

I have no intelligence to communicate and generally write short letters, so that you need never expect long letters from me.

Adieu

Your's sincerely,

S.B.

Dover—21st July 1803

It is with great pleasure, my dearest Sally, that I acknowledge the receipt of your Letter of the 12th Inst[ant]. I accept it as a pledge of the faithful performance of your promise to be a punctual and a frequent correspondent. You are the most delightful one I have, and your Letters will always yield me the highest satisfaction. They tend to brighten (if that were possible) those prospects of domestic bliss and future happiness with you, which my imagination forms of the most exalted kind. Well has it been observed, "how sweet is Love itself possess'd, when but love's shadows do afford such joys"?

You mention our walk on the Brandywine with the company from Wilmington and say, you often reflect on yourself &c. My lovely Sally, if the recollections of what passed that evening can give you one uneasy sensation, I pray you to remember it no more. Attached to you by the sincerest love, I acknowledge that the return my attentions met with that evening from you hurt and mortified me in the extreme. My pride was not a suffi-

cient shield to protect my feelings from the blow—had it indeed come from another lady present I should scarcely have felt it. Till I had an opportunity of speaking with you next day, I was wretched. Since that interview I have hardly thought of the occurrence, and you I hope will hereafter cease to mind it. If thought of again, let it be remembered only as a proof of my love. And if it should be ever again mentioned, let it be after our marriage, cited by yourself as evidence of the power you then had over me, and which the charms of your person & the virtues of your mind will ever insure to you.

In my last letter, I entreated you, if you would not agree to an earlier period, to fix on November as the time for our marriage. Permit me again, my charming Girl, to repeat my solicitations on this subject. Let not I implore you a slight cause delay it. Remember the many anxious hours I have already past. I have given you every proof in my power of my attachment—if you require more, tell me what they are, and I will give them. Every proof consistent with my honor & in my power shall be afforded you —I know you would seek no other kind. 'Tis common with some of your sex, in cases like the present, to doubt the motives of the other, and to suppose their views are interested. Perhaps in many instances their suppositions are well founded. You tho' I trust entertain no such fears. On this subject I fondly flatter myself, I have satisfied you sufficiently. At any rate, if I have not, most willingly will I do it, in any manner you please. I solemnly declare, 'tis love *alone* that prompts me to seek your hand.

Your mamma before she left Kent mentioned to my mother that our marriage was to take place in August. Both our parents may be surprized at a long postponement after that period, and by both perhaps I may be blamed. Each of them has given their approbation; and no doubt they would be better satisfied that our marriage should be shortly solemnized, than to see it longer delayed.

Do then, I most earnestly beg of you, do consent in your next letter, to the month of November or sooner. On this subject my dear Sally, write to me freely. Your letters afford me great delight & will always be rec[eive]d in the most perfect confidence, for no human eye but my own will ever see them. I have pledged to you my faith. I am attached to you by the most powerful of human passions. My honor is solemnly engaged to you—then do not refuse to frankly communicate your sentiments. The chief object

in my [life] will always be to render you as happy as possible.

Adieu,
and believe me ever
Yours most affectionately
HENRY

Dover, 29th, Aug[us]t, 1803

It has been said, my dearest Sally, that "absence is surely death, from those we love," and if ever the saying was verified 'tis certainly as much so in my case as in any that ever existed. Separated from you, the enjoyments of life are languid, and all its pleasures tasteless: Save alone the happiness I feel in receiving your letters, and in anticipating the pleasing scenes of my future life, when you, my charming girl, will be the loved companion of my tenderest joys . . . .

To you, my dear, my lovely Sally, will belong my tenderest regards and kindest attentions. To effect your happiness, shall be my constant care. My utmost execution shall be to please, to delight; and to smooth for you the rugged road of life.

As November is fixed on for our marriage, I beseech you, if you will not agree to an *earlier* period, to consent that it shall take place in the beginning of that month; and in the meantime, do, I pray you, my dear Sally, comply with your promise in writing frequently to me: If you approve the plan, you can inclose your Letters to my sister Ann.

Adieu:
And believe me, yours most
faithfully and affectionately,
HENRY M. RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Miss Banning
near Wilmington
Delaware]

September 17 [1803]

Dear Sir

I should have acknowledged the reception of yours sooner, but have been prevented by indisposition and the expectation of seeing Kent shortly, but that expectation is now destroyed, by my not being sufficiently re-

covered to accompany Mama; several days I was very sick, and altogether confined to my bed, I am still languid, but infinitely better, and shall soon no doubt when I remove a little uneasiness which preys upon my mind be quite recovered. That I am unhappy is most true, and to merit the title of capriciousness is indeed distressing, but I am deserving of it I know perfectly well, and am indeed sorry for it. Ever since I gave my consent to marry you in October have I been wretched, so conscious am I of my inability to perform the office of a wife, that the idea of attempting it makes me unhappy. Situated as I am you cannot blame me for my reluctance. Blest with affectionate Parents, who bestow every thing on me that I wish, and do everything to gratify me, and not yet seventeen, with an estate equal to my expenses; can many people imagine I could renounce the enjoyments which I have so short a time possessed in so great a degree as now, for the unavoidable cares of a family, and taking upon myself a task I am very inadequate to perform.

It has not been more than a year since I left school, I surely ought to have a much longer time to judge of the pleasures and crosses of a single life, that I may relish the pains and pleasures attending a married one. But as I promised to Marry you in November so I must perform I suppose, tho' heaven knows reluctantly! Next March would be a more eligible time, I think, you would then have me with my own willing consent. However, I leave you to your will, and I to my Fate,

Adieu,
Your ever sincere,
S. Banning

After these unquiet scenes, Henry finally steered his bark into harbor, and he and Sally were married in November, 1803. They came to live in the old house on Dover Green, where Henry's father had lived from 1767 till his death in 1785.

To this day Sally's sketches hang on the parlor wall; her spinet is treasured here. After Sally's death it was silent for a long time and was carried to the second floor. Perhaps there was not much anxiety about that move. When it had been brought to Dover from Wilmington in 1804, there was great agitation expressed by Mrs. McKee. The music-

KNOW all Men by these Presents, That We

Henry M Ridgely & James Rogers

are firmly held and bound unto David Hall Governor and Commander in Chief of the State of Delaware, in the Sum of five Hundred Pounds good and lawful Money of America, to be paid to the said David Hall Esq. or his Successors; To the which Payment well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, jointly and severally, for and in the whole, our Heirs, Executors, and Administrators, firmly by these Presents. Sealed with our Seals. Dated the 21st Day of Novr in the Year of our Lord One Thousand eight hundred & three

THE Condition of this Obligation is such, That if there shall not hereafter appear any lawful Let or Impediment, by Reason of any Pre-contract, Consanguinity, Affinity, or any other just Cause whatsoever, but that the above-mentioned

Henry M. Ridgely & Sarah Banning

may lawfully marry; and that there is not any Suit depending before any Judge Ecclesiastical or Civil, for or concerning any such Pre-contract; and also if the said Parties, and each of them, are of the Ages following, to wit, Female of Eighteen, and Male of Twenty-one Years, and are not under the Tuition of his or her Parents, or have the full Consent of his or her Parents or Guardians respectively to the said Marriage; and if they or either of them are not indented Servants; and do and shall save harmless and keep indemnified the above named David Hall Esquire, and his Successors, for and concerning the premises; and shall likewise save harmless and keep indemnified the Clergyman, or Minister, who shall join the said Parties in Matrimony, for, or by Reason of his so doing; then this Obligation to be void and of none Effect; or else to stand and remain in full Force and Virtue.

Sealed and delivered in the Presence of

Archd. Alexander

Henry M. Ridgely (Seal)

James Rogers (Seal)

master superintended the packing, and the lady feared the crate might overset and be thrown into the bay if the shallop was exposed to a head wind. From the second floor the old instrument was banished to a barn. When it was moved back to the house on the Green and welcomed into the parlor again, it was carried by an old farmer and his sons. As they set it down in the parlor the old man said "She is weak in her jints, but if you give her a coat of paint and ile her up, I think she'll do!" As he said this the jar of its coming down brought from the case a cloud of fluff from chicken feathers that settled over the furniture in the room! It is now without a "coat of paint," but has had a careful cleaning and repeated polishing. The old mahogany and satinwood have a soft glow. Above the keyboard sprays of sweet peas with bow knots of ribbon are painted in lovely colors, adorning the name "Muzio Clementi and Comp^y^, Cheapside, London." The keys are silent, for the wires within once tempted a young lady of the family who needed them for making wax flowers; she pulled them out ruthlessly and broke the hammers in doing so. Should we meet her in Heaven, it will not be Heaven for a while.

To Sally and Henry were born many children. The oldest was Charles George, born August 21st, 1804. His infant charms were extolled by his Aunt Mary Ridgely in her letters from Eden Hill in 1805.

In the course of the following twenty-seven years, fourteen more children were added to the family. Only eight lived beyond childhood, and of these Elizabeth died when she was barely twenty.

Henry was occupied with what in those days was an extensive practice. He was also interested in banking. The Farmer's Bank, a state institution, was established in 1807, with branches in the three counties. He was elected its first president and continued in that office till his death in 1847.

In 1810 and again in 1812, he was elected to the United States Congress, and at other times he was in Washington on private business. In 1827 he was sent to the U. S. Senate.

Some of the family correspondence follows.

Surely no man ever had a keener appetite for letters than Henry Moore Ridgely! He insisted on receiving them frequently from Sally and demanded ever more and more from his first born, Charles George.

Washington—23 February 1812

My dear Charles

As you have by this time, I hope, sufficiently improved your self in writing to answer my letters, I now begin a correspondence with you, that on your part ought to be, and no doubt, will be kept up and cultivated. While other boys of your age waste their precious time in play and idleness, and very often in mischief, and grow up to be ignorant and worthless men, you, I trust, will take a different course, and by devoting a great portion of your time to study and to business and being obedient to your mother, obtain a plentiful stock of useful knowledge and information and become a worthy member of society. One very useful part of education is that of corresponding well, and this is principally to be obtained by practice. I shall therefore expect to receive from you a letter every week or two, containing all the news of Dover and the neighbourhood.

On Wednesday last I went to the Navy-yard in this city to see one of the United States' ships of war launched. She was the Enterprise, an old ship that had been completely repaired by order of the government. An imense crowd of spectators were assembled on the occasion. Both the English and the French Ministers were present—as were also a great many ladies and members of Congress, and not a few boys. The things being ready, the ship was pushed from her station on the warff and went most beautifully into the water amidst the huzzas of the crowd. During the time that they were preparing, a very small boat with two men in her, kept sailing about in the river, as if to witness the launch: when just before the ship was pushed off, one of the men in the boat was taken with a fit and in falling unfortunately overset the boat. The accident was not immediately discovered from the shore, and before it was noticed the poor man who had the fit had sunk to the bottom and was drowned. The other man was seen in the water endeavouring to save himself by clinging to the boat whose bottom was uppermost. Immediately several boats were sent from the shore and one poor fellow was saved. When he was taken up the hat of his unfortunate companion was seen floating on the water. The man drowned was a block-maker at the Navy Yard and had left a wife and children. Thus you see, my dear son, that people may assemble to enjoy festivity and glee, and may, in the midst of their diversion, witness scenes of distress and misery!

On the second page of this letter there are two words spelled wrong. Tell me in your letter which they are.

Your affectionate Father

H. M. Ridgely

In this letter I enclose one
for your mother.

[*Addressed to* Charles George Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

March 1st 1812

My dear Father

It was with great pleasure I received your letter and am sorry that my improvement has been so slow in writing. I have lost a great deal of time this winter but I hope I shall make it up this summer by greater attention to my studies.

You related a very melancholy circumstance in your letter of the poor man being drowned that had the fit. I observed you spelt the word wharf incorrectly in your letter. Xcuse my first attempt in letter writing.

Your affectionate

Son—C. G. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Henry M. Ridgely, Esqr
Washington]

Washington—29 March 1812

My dear Charles

I was very much pleased with your letter, and hope that you will omit not to write to me very frequently. You ought, every week or two, to communicate to me all the news of Dover and the neighbourhood. This would be very agreeable to me and very useful to you. In a very little while, by attention and practise, you will become an excellent correspondent, and I shall be proud to receive your letters and mark your improvement.

The word "wharff" was one of the words incorrectly spelt in my former letter, as you discovered; but there is another word in that letter, that is not properly spelt: Look over the letter again and in your next point out to me

which it is—In reading the letter attend particularly to the meaning of each word and you will easily observe it.

Inform me what book you are reading at school, and how far you have progressed in the bible—you read, I hope, every day to your mother, two or three chapters; and, as I shall, before long, begin to examine you, you do, I trust, endeavour to understand and remember what you read.

Bear constantly in mind that youth is the season for improvement—Be diligent in your studies—Love your books more than your play—and obey every word your mother speaks to you—Separate yourself from bad boys and make companions only of those who are good.

In your next letter tell me how the timothy looks in my lot near the stable.

In this letter are two words incorrectly spelt, inform me which they are.

Your affectionate Father
H. M. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Charles G. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

January 30th 1813

My dear Father

I am ashamed for not having answered your affectionate letter sooner. There is not much news in Dover, but I will tell you as much as I can. Old Mr. Hillard and Daniel Ryley is dead. Mr. Meteyer keeps dancing school only Monday's and Saturday's. We have no expectation of the legeslature rising. Mr. Hinkley hears us only two lesson's in the morning and in the evening none. Our house looks very neat, Andrew stays with Mrs. Cooke while the legeslature is sitting. In my letter I omitted to tell you that Mr. Hinkley gave us a vacation of a week at Christmas. Poor little William is very unwell, he is sick part of every day, he has not been right well since Chistmast. Aunt says you or Mother must write to her. I have had two pair of new shoes since you left me, Aunt says I am very extravagant.

Your truly affectionate son,
C. G. Ridgely

Yesterday Jabez Jenkins of Camden died.

The word spelt wrong in your letter was evening.

[*Addressed to* H. M. Ridgely]

July 11th 1813 Dover

My Dear Father

I was very glad to receive your letter on 30th of June last. In your letter you requested me to tell you how many Lieutenant Clark had enlisted, the number of men he took to Lewis was 20. Mr. Man was put in Jail for forgery, he forged seven times on the Farmers Bank, and drew to the amount of 100 Dollars. My foot is very sore, the complaint is a stone bruise, it gives me so much pain I can scarcely write to you. I have not quite finished Sanford & Merton. I read the Bible regularly ever day.

Monday July 12th) I began my letter yesterday only my foot gave me so much pain I had to stop, and conclude to day, yesterday my foot came to a head and to day I feel much better. I was very much pleased with the story of Leonidas King of Sparta in Sanford & Merton. I hope I shall receive a letter from you soon. I am your affectionate son

CHARLES G. RIDGELY

[*Addressed to* Hon[ora]ble Henry M. Ridgely
Member of Congress
Washington]

Washington Friday afternoon, 4 June 1813

I am now seated, my dearest wife, in the same room and at the same table from which I have written you many letters, and feel the same pleasure in writing to you that I always have felt. It is however this evening rather warm, and you will excuse my short letter on that account, if indeed it should happen to be short, which you know is a quality that my letters to you do not usually possess.

In the first place I must give you an account of my journey. The day I left you I arrived in Wilmington in the afternoon about perhaps four o'Clock. As I had some little matters in that town to attend to, and determined to start for Baltimore the next morning sooner than the mail stage comes on, and as besides the afternoon was warm and I tired and not inclined to walk much, I did not get to go out to Dr. McKee's and did not see either Mr. or Mrs. Davis or any of the family, or your brother or any of his family. I staid at Brinton's that night and started from Wilmington the next morning at eight o'Clock in the Expedition stage. We were very much crowded and did not reach Baltimore till ten o'Clock at night. I however got

to bed by eleven o'Clock and slept soundely till about four the next morning. Yesterday morning (Thursday) I left Baltimore in the mail stage at six o'Clock and arrived safely in this City at half past two in the afternoon. The roads from Baltimore to this place were very bad, cut up by the great number of waggons that now travel that road. I left the stage at Tomlinson's door where a Hack happened to be standing; into which I had my trunks immediately put and came off to Mrs. Wadsworths. She had been good enough to keep my room for me, of which I got immediate possession and which is as comfortable, as any room, in this City, can be to me; needs only your company. In fact the room is so nicely done up that I suspect she expected you on with me. She has however not said so to me. Indeed I do wish I had you with me. Our mess consists of Mr. Hunter, of Rhode Island, Mr. Pickering and Mr. Kis of Massachusetts, Mr. Kirt, Mr. Howell & Mr. Sadder of New York, and Mr. Cooper & myself.

To-day I took my seat in Congress where I discovered a great many strange faces. There are about ninety new members. Nothing of any importance has yet been done.

On Wednesday evening last, I went to the President's levy for the first time. Every thing was in fine stile and it was said to be a "most brilliant night." There were a great many persons, both male & female, and Mrs. Madison performed her part, I thought, extremely well.

I was invited some time ago to dine with the President, but as I did not receive his note till the day before the dinner, (altho its date was three or four days prior to its receipt) I thought it did not comport with the honour of my State to accept the invitation, and I accordingly sent him a note declining the honour. Horsey told me if I did not accept the invitation, I should not perhaps get another this winter, that however had no effect on me, and I answered his note as above stated. On Thursday last I received another invitation to dine with him on Tuesday next. This invitation, I have written him word I will do myself the honour to accept. Mr. Bayard and Mr. Horsey are invited on the same day.

I am invited with Mr. Horsey to dine with the British minister on Wednesday next. This invitation I shall also accept unless something turns up to prevent.

But, my dearest, lovely Sally, there is nothing here that can afford me half the real and substantial pleasure that I enjoy at home with you and

our dear boys, and in the midst of all the pageantry and show that this place can afford, my mind looks upon it all as empty unsubstantial pomp, incapable of yielding happiness, and considers it as nothing, when compared to those domestic comforts which a man can only find at home. My thoughts, amid the whole of it, are ever wandering to you and the dear pledges of our love.

I did give Abraham Goldsborough leave to turn his creatures on my meadow. But it is now high time they were kept off, and I wish you would send him word that they must not be permitted to run on it any longer. They will now head up the grass and injure the meadow very much if they go on it.

I did subscribe for "Biglands View of the World," and am glad you have three of the volumes. I hope you will be much entertained with them.

I am very sorry to hear of Mary's indisposition. I hope she has recovered. Say for me very affectionately to her and the Chancellor.

I fear my long letters always tire you. Ask Mr. Caverly what day in January the directors of the Farmers Bank meet, and let me know in your *next* letter.

Kiss my dear boys for me. May Divine Goodness ever protect you and them.

Adieu, my dearest wife, and believe me
Your ever sincerely & truly affectionate husband.
H.M.R.

[*To* Mrs. H. M. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

Washington Sunday 20 June 1813

I have just returned from the bath and with great pleasure sit down to write to my dearest wife, whose image is constantly present to my mind and who deserves and has all my affection and my love. You cannot conceive how I wish that I had brought you with me. I feel more at a loss now for your company and society than I did last winter. It is so warm and sultry that I can neither visit nor exercise nor study; in truth since I came here my only amusements and pleasure have been in thinking of, writing to and receiving letters from you, my beloved Sally. Our mess altho com-

posed of gentlemanly and honourable men is not as pleasant as it was last winter. It would indeed be difficult to form a mess as agreeable as ours was during the last session. The loss of Messrs. Blucker, Baker & McB cannot well be supplied by others. However I had much rather be in our present mess than any other I know here, and that is satisfactory.

Both Mr. Reed and Mr. Horsey have spoken to me on the subject of forming a mess next winter with our families. These gentlemen and their wives you know: What think you of being in a mess with them? If we determine to live together next winter, we shall endeavor to arrange that matter before we leave here and have our lodgings engaged and our party formed.

Your letter of Wednesday last reached me yesterday. I am very glad to hear that Charles George has recovered of his agues. I join with you sincerely in hoping that he may have no return of them. If you would make him bath himself two or three times a week just after rising in the morning, in clean water drawn from the well immediately before he uses it, I think you need not be apprehensive of his having the ague. I have long considered it as a preventive of that disease. I wish you would keep Charles closely to his books and studies; now is the time to give him a *habit* of reading. Tell him I shall expect on my return, to find that he has made great proficiency in acquiring useful knowledge. I wish also you would make him write to me regularly at least once a week. This will be of the greatest service to him in *several* respects, not necessary to mention to you as your own good sense will point them out. Make him write *himself*, assist him but very little, and tell him to put down any thing that occurs, with out reserve or ceremony. This is the only way for him to learn to write well. He is at that time of life now, when his time is most precious and should be properly informed. At the same time he should be permitted to take a sufficiency of manly exercise.

I am summoned to breakfast. Adieu for a few minutes! In the course of ten or twelve days, I suppose, my lot of grass back of Harper's garden will be fit to cut. When it is ripe, and not before, you will be good enough to have it mowed and made into hay, and when sufficiently cured put into the loft of the new stable. It should not be suffered to get *too ripe* or the hay will not be as good and when it is cut, (& two mowers may easily cut it in one day) it should be kept in constant motion till cured. It will in this manner become cured much quicker than when it is turned over only twice or

thrice in a day, & the hay will be much better. If the weather should be good & the hay sufficiently stirred, it will be fit to put up in the afternoon of the second day from the day on which it is cut. However, this must be judged of by persons present. Before the hay is put in the loft let it be cleaned & swept.

Tim, I hope, has been kept constantly drawing out the manure on the lot over the Hill next the Chancellor's farm, and the manure when drawn out has, I hope, been regularly covered with dirt to protect it from the sun & weather.

Old Doctor Tilton has been in Washington for some time. He is appointed *surgeon General* in the army of the United States. The appointment, he told me, was *offered* to him. He has dined once with us, and this morning I met him at the baths.

Mr. Madison has been sick for four days, and not visible either at the house or to committees from Congress. It is generally supposed he has the *war fever*. If he have any feeling or any conscience, disasters enough have befallen the country in consequence of his folly, to make him sick. He perhaps too expects, as most men here do, that this summer's campaign will multiply upon the nation the calamities of this ruinous war.

I have purchased "The Book" and find in it much more than was published in the Aurora: Among other papers there is the deposition of Captain Manby & of Mr. Lawrence the painter & I shall carry it home with me on my return. I will also bring you the book you write for in your last letter.

I send to the dear pledges of our love a father's blessing. May the God of goodness ever protect & support you and them.

Adieu my dearest my beloved wife!

Your most truly & sincerely affectionate husband

H.M.R.

[*To* Mrs. Henry Moore Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

Washington Sunday 11 July 1813

The mail of yesterday brought me, my dearest wife, your affectionate letter of Wednesday last. . . .

We had in our mess for a few days Captain Hall of the Marine Corps, the same gentleman who married Hetty Broom. I do not know that you ever

saw him. He appeared to be a very modest clever man and I was pleased with him.

The weather is now very pleasant, so much so that I fear it will delay the adjournment of Congress. While the very hot weather continued, every member almost seemed anxious to get away from here. There is a talk of an adjournment in about two weeks. The business of the session might certainly be got thro in that time, but there are many here who like their six dollars a day and if the weather continues pleasant will in all probability wish to stay longer. For myself I am, in truth, perfectly *homesick* and an adjournment would, to me, be the most agreeable act Congress could do.

Messrs. Horsey, Reed & I have engaged lodgings with Mrs. Wadsworth for ourselves & wives for the next session of Congress. The Ladies are to have a drawing room separate from the mess room, which is to be *their* exclusive property. We are to pay an extra price of ten dollars a week for this room. We are to pay her twelve dollars a week for ourselves and the same for our wives and four dollars a week for each servant. Horsey & I have to have two chambers each; One for him & his wife, & an adjoining small room for his nurse, and a small room adjoining the chamber I now occupy is to be reserved for your nurse to which there is a door of communication from my chamber. . . . arrangement will I trust please you. . . . expect to have our horses & carriages here for the convenience of our families.

The establishment as you discover will be expensive, but as I mean to decline coming here after the present Congress, I have formed my determination principally on two causes. I shall enjoy the pleasure and comfort of the society of a beloved wife, and gratify her with a winter's residence in the capital of a great empire.

I do *not* expect to purchase a new carriage or pair of horses this summer, you will have those we now have particularly attended to and kept in order.

Tell my dear *Betz* I send her a kiss, notwithstanding she is so much offended as to send me no more of her sweet kisses. My love to Charles & tell him to write to me. May God bless you & them. Adieu my lovely Sally! Your most truly & sincerely affectionate husband.

H.M.R.

[*To* Mrs. Henry Moore Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

When Sally accompanied her husband to Washington, Charles George stayed with his Aunt Mary. She was now Mrs. William Morris and lived across the Green. Mary had a small son of her own, William Morris, Jr., but her nephew was always welcome in her home. A letter of Charles George to his parents follows:

Dec. . 29 1813

My dear Father and Mother

I received your letter on Monday with a great deal of pleasure. On Friday we turned out Mr. Hinkley and he was very angry. We had a handsome Ball before Mr. Meteyer left this place, he has gone to Philadelphia, and is coming back this week or next, I am not certain which. William is very unwell. Towards the first of your going off, I was very unwell.

In your letter you told me to obey what was said to me, I have honour to add that I shall obey in every particular.

Kiss Sister for me. Aunt sends her love to you.

Your truly affectionate
Son.
CHARLES G. RIDGELY

Let me entreat of you my dear Brother, as you value your Son, to urge the necessity of constant application to Study, lay down a rule for every day and I will try and get him to attend to it—every time I attempt to get him to his book he says "Father w[oul]d not call him in," and really I am so ignorant of your wishes that I feel undetermined how to act, from the time the day is fairly light, till dark again, he w[oul]d be out, and then to bed as soon as supper is over. Do give proper directions. I rejoice to hear you got safe through y[ou]r journey—and hope by this time you are all over the fatigue of it. George tells you he has been unwell, he was quite sick two or three days, in consequence of a cold caught, I believe by going a guning with Joshua Clayton, down to the creek and getting very wet the Saturday after you went from home, he is now quite well. My dear little William is very sick. With love to Sally and a Kiss to Elisabeth, I am my dear Brother yours affect[ionate]ly.

MARY RIDGELY MORRIS

[*Addressed to* H. .M. . Ridgely Esquire
Member of Congress
Washington]

We include no more letters between Dover and Washington until some written in 1815.

Washington—6 Feb. 1815

My dear Charles—

I herewith send you an Intelligencer of to-day containing Gen. Jackson's official account of his victory of the 8th ult[imo] over the British Forces at Orleans. You will no doubt feel particularly interested in the fate of the gallant Col. Rainey. When you and your mother have read the paper let the Chancellor have it.

Remember me most affectionately to your mother & sister.

Your affectionate father

H. M. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Charles G. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

13 Feb[rua]ry [1815]
Monday night

My dear Father

Est rumor pascis ibi. Some young gentleman states that a ship arrived at New York, and that it was illuminated vero ego non credo id. I have been searching the papers, and I do not see peace, but I see simptoms of it. Sister is better today. I am afraid that the mail will close so I must conclude.

Your most affectionate
Son
C. G. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Henry M. Ridgely Esqr.
Washington City]

Feb. 22nd 1815

Dear Father

I am setting here to write to you. Mother has got a very fine daughter, and every body that sees it says it is the handsomest child that ever you had,

mother wants you to ask Mrs. Reed to get her a linnen cambrick and lace for itt. Mother has been better this time than ever she has been, and she wants you to bring her a present. So I must conclude.

Your most affectionate
Son
C. G. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Henry M. Ridgely Esq.
Washington City]

This child was Ann Ridgely, later Mrs. Charles I. du Pont, to whom the family is indebted for preserving the letters of former generations.

Charles George, Henry M. Ridgely's eldest child, entered West Point in 1822. Shortly before he graduated in 1826, he wrote the following letter to the sister Ann whose birth he had reported to their father in 1815:

West Point May 3rd 1826

My dear Sist[e]r.

I received but a short time ago your letter, and have been so much pleased with your punctuality, that I resolved to answer it immediately.

I had not heard from home, for so long that I did not know that Mother has been sick since her return to Dover, which from your letter I should have judged to have been the case: indeed I did not know that she had been so ill as has been represented. I heard merely that she was indisposed, till the receipt of the last letter of my uncle, in which he mentioned that she had so far recovered as to be able to walk about in her room. I had understood that you had moved to the town, but knew not how long since.

I am now my dear Sister as busily engaged as I can be, I will tell you, what are our occupations for the day. We rise at day break and at six o'clock on one morning we have to drill, or march, on the next to recite our lessons in tactics till 7 o'clock, when we breakfast. At 8 o'clock the bugle blows, and study hours commence which last till 1 o'clock when we dine—at 2 the bugle blows again for study hours and they do not cease until 4 o'clock when we drill again till near six, at which time we have evening parade

and supper, immediately after supper, the bugle blows for study hours and they last till 10 o'clock at night, when we must all be in bed. Thus you see I am constantly engaged.

I am glad to see you so far advanced in History, you will soon, if father has time, copy the geography which I wrote off, it's the best exercise you can possibly have in Spelling—and Spelling is an art, which although it is no honor to know, is a very great stain not to know. Too much attention cannot be devoted therefore to it. Do you read aloud or to yourself? Reading aloud to a person competent to correct you, is another important exercise, as it will correct a sing-song tone which is very harsh. But you have heard all this mentioned before.

I suppose that the illness of Mother has prevented me from hearing from home before.

Now my dear sister I must conclude my letter to you. Write me soon.

Your most aff[ectionate]
Brother
C. G. Ridgely

[Cadet Charles George Ridgely]

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

Washington—Wednesday Morning
24 January 1827

My dearest wife,

Having just risen, made up my fire and put on my clothes, I now sit writing to you by candle light, the day just breaking: you I trust are now enjoying a sweet morning nap, surrounded by our children all safe and in health, and dreaming of your absent husband. I see however on going to my window and looking out that the day is broken and therefore I think it likely that our dear Nick or Eugene has disturbed your nap and dream by this time. I wish that I was now with you, and if they have not, I would soon *rouse* you.

I reached Elkton on Saturday night about seven o'clock, having dined and remained at Middletown about two hours: this was I think the coldest ride I ever had; at Mr. Hillyard's gate I had almost determined to leave the

dearborn and return home on foot,—however we there raised the top of the dearborn and came on; at Smyrna I bought a good warm pair of socks and fell in with Williamson & Clement travelling in an open gig to Wilmington, we then departed and having warmed at Black Bird & taken Williamson in the dearborn we stopt and dined at Middletown, went on from there, left Williamson & Clement at the Buck Tavern . . . and reached Elkton as I have stated above. I continued at Elkton till about four oclock on Sunday afternoon when I left there in one of the steamboat stages and reached Baltimore at two oclock on Monday morning. Having got to bed and got what sleep I could I left Baltimore at nine [o]clock on Monday morning and reached this City between three & four oclock in the afternoon—no accident having happened on the journey but it being three of the coldest days I ever travelled. As soon as Mr. McLane heard of my being in the City he called on me and before night on Monday evening I was fixed in my room at Mrs. Cottringer's in F. Street. The room I occupy is small but quite comfortable, and I have an excellent place in it for my bed on the opposite side from the window. Our mess consists of Gen. VanRensselier and Mr. Van Burin of New York and Mr. McLane and myself and of a son of Mr. Van Burin ab[ou]t sixteen or seventeen years old. We have no ladies of the mess.

Yesterday morning I took my seat in The Senate, where I met Mr. Clayton who was kind and cordial in his reception of me. A little while after the Senate came to order, Mr. Randolph came up and gave me a most hearty shake by the hand and cordial welcome to the Senate expressing his pleasure in seeing me and seeing me particularly in that place.

Mr. Rodney staid on Sunday night at the same tavern in Baltimore where I slept, but as I did not get there until 2 o'clock & he left it at seven oclock in the morning on his way home, I did not see him. I was told he left his respects & compliments for me.

I am anxious to hear from you, and I wish particularly to know whether Charles has heard from West Point and what is the result. Inform me also if Charles' note was discounted in Bank on Tuesday last. Tell him that my whole expense in travelling from Dover to this place, including stage hire, was seventeen dollars & six cents and that I lived all the way as well as I wished and like a gentleman and never missed a meal.

Give my love to all our dear children & a kiss to Nick and Eugene. May God bless & protect you and them.

Believe me, my dearest Sally,
Your sincerely & truly affectionate husband
H.M.R.

I would have written to you yesterday
but did not get paper untill in the night

[P.S.] Direct your letters to me "H. M. Ridgely, Esquire
U. S. Senate
City of Washington"

[*Addressed to* Mrs. H. M. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

In 1826 Charles George received from the Secretary of War, Mr. Barbour, an appointment to teach at West Point. In the following year, 1827, his father insisted that he resign and give up his army career. There seems to have been an indication that the boy was leading an intemperate life, yet he had made an excellent record during his training, and Secretary Barbour is quoted as having said he regretted losing "an officer who had stood so high in all his classes in the Military Academy." The father then advised Charles George to study law "for law is the path to fame in a free country." He said Charles had limitless opportunities if he could become stable, for he said "he has ability, education, and the favorable opinion of many of the first men in the nation." Charles turned to one occupation after another with brief enthusiasms, but never persevered.

At one time, September 30th, 1827, his mother wrote, "Charles George makes home pleasant and will make his Father's absence in Washington easier to bear." At other times his irregular habits made home uncomfortable, and one wonders if West Point should have been abandoned.

His Aunt Wright in Philadelphia welcomed him as a guest, but if he was occupied in study while there he made no mention of it in his letters. There is, however, considerable indication that he was seeking employment in engineering, for which we suppose his West Point training had prepared him.

To resume the family correspondence between Dover and Washington, a letter follows from Henry Ridgely to his daughter Ann. She had been for several years her father's delight. He had her study with him and supervised her course of reading in Latin. As he grew older he often called her to read Latin to him in the night. After her mother died she became his constant companion until this companionship was interrupted by her marriage.

Washington, Tuesday, 27 Feb. 1827

My dear Ann,

I was very much pleased yesterday at receiving your agreeable letter of Friday last, and am now answering it by candlelight in the morning, while you, I have no doubt, are fast asleep. The day however has just broke, and Nicholas and Eugene I guess are calling Susan or perhaps up. But they, you know, are not quite so lazy in the morning as you and Elizabeth are. Perhaps, tho, since I have been from home you have learned to be an earlier riser.

Your mother has been trespassing, has she, on my poplars? When I come home I shall have to court martiall her. You may therefore give her notice to prepare for trial. And as I presume you can duly prove the charge against her, you may as well at the same time tell her to prepare for punishment, or have a petition ready to present, immediately on my arrival, throwing herself on the mercy of the court and praying for a full and free pardon.

I am very glad that you and your sister have given up the Dover Balls. You ought not to attend them. They are not proper places for ladies who have a just feeling of self respect and honest pride.

Since I began this letter I have had my fire made, have shaved and washed myself and changed my linen and am this minute called down to breakfast before eight o'clock—so good morning to you till after breakfast.

Having breakfasted I shall now finish my letter. I am glad to find that you are pleased with Rollin's history. Do, my dear Ann, read it *attentively* and understand and fix in your memory all you read. Do not let company or triffles take off your attention—now is the time for improvement. Apply yourself therefore diligently and closely.

I spent an hour last evening very agreeably with Miss Baker and Mrs.

Carr and Miss Carr who is a little older than Elizabeth; your mother will perhaps remember her a little child when she was here. I took tea with them and there met old Mr. Lane, as crazy as ever.

You must, I think, judging from your letter and your mother's letter, have had a great deal of company during my absence.

Give my love to your mother, sisters and brothers. Take good care of Rindo,

and believe me, my dear Ann,
Your truly affectionate father,
H. M. Ridgely

In 1827, Elizabeth had gone "a-visiting." She was in New Castle with the Rogers family, and she describes the effect the service had upon her when her hosts took her to the Episcopal Church on Sunday morning.

The Ridgelys who came to Delaware from Maryland in the seventeen-thirty decade were Church of England. When Nicholas settled in Dover he was soon made a member of old Christ Church vestry, and he and his descendants were actively identified with the Parish. Often one of them was a warden of the Church.

After the Revolution, the English church languished and for half a century its life was feeble in Dover and other parts of Delaware. Meanwhile, Wesley's followers were full of evangelical zeal. There was a season when Christ Church, Dover, was closed. Elizabeth had evidently been wavering in her allegiance, but the service at New Castle and Mr. Preston's interpretation of the service revived her attachment to the Episcopal church.

In Dover many members of the family were drawn away from the church. Mary Ridgely Morris, Elizabeth's aunt, always an ardent lover or a warm hater, remained loyal to the old faith. In 1832 she wrote that she began "to think that Dover has not one Episcopalian in it but myself."

When she heard that her sister-in-law was to attend a Methodist class meeting she wrote to her, "I shall feel for Mr. Piggott if you do." Robert Piggott was a clergyman of the Church of England who was in charge of Christ Church, Dover, and St. Ann's in Smyrna nearby. In 1832 when he planned to remove to Philadelphia, he wrote from

Smyrna in July, to Henry Moore Ridgely, that he hoped to preach his final sermon in Dover the following Sunday, and that he would claim Mr. Ridgely's hospitality then, "since it was to your house I came, when as a stranger, I appeared among you." After Robert Piggott left, the church seems to have been without a Rector for several years.

In 1841 Mary Ridgely Morris wrote her brother Henry, asking for the use of the Court Room for a service the following Sunday as the newly consecrated Bishop Lee was expected. She urged this because, she said, many persons were unwilling to go to a service in the church "because of dampness, lizards, and snakes."

New Castle, Sunday afternoon

My dearest Mother & Sister

I think there is no more harm in writing to you than there is in sleeping, which I should do if I were not writing. I received your affectionate letter yesterday, and was much obliged to you for the money you sent, my dear Mother. I should not have written this letter to day only I shall not have an other opportunity until Wednesday, and by that time I shall begin to expect you and Father here, indeed dear Mother you must come, I shall have been here two weeks on next Thursday, and shall be anxious to return home at that time. I wish very much Lucinda Hall was in Wilmington, I should like very much to pay her a visit before I return home. I enjoy myself extremely at this time indeed I have had a delightful visit. The New Castle people are so attentive and polite. Mr. and Mrs. Rogers are as affectionate as it is possible. Mr. Rogers says I must stay until November and he says he will then take me home. Judge Rogers is staying here at this time, he is agreeable. Perhaps you have heard Susan Emerson speak of him, he is a widower from Lancaster. I have been out almost every day since I have been here. This day Dearest Mother has been a most solemn one to me, the sacrament was administered by Mr. Prestman I never saw anything so solemn. Yesterday I spoke to Mr. Prestman on the subject, he advised me to commune with the Church today. I did so. I trembled like an aspen lief. I am very thankful that I cam forward and I hope it will be of great service to me. Mrs. Rogers took me by the arm, indeed it was a very great effort. It seems now as if I am more a member of the Episcopal Church than of the Methodist, as I have never comuned with the Methodist. I like the Episcopalian much better than I ever did. I think Mr. Prest-

man is an excellent man and an excellent christian; how sweetly the organ played this morning during the administration of the Sacrament.

I had the most delightfull party on board of a ship that has been here for three weeks past and has just sailed for Rushia. I never enjoyed myself more in my life and I have heard every person say the same. Cousin Elizabeth was at it; she stayed in New Castle for two or three days at Mr. Riddles. We went about eight oclock in the evening and stayed untill one; it was a very pleasant evening—Mrs. Rogers was there. They had dancing but of course I did not join with them in that amusement. We understood before we went that there was to be no dancing; the officers said they could not get any music. The ship was most beautifully lighted up—Oh, it was a splendid sight. We had a plenty of beaux. Although I did not dance, I was walking all the evening with *very agreeable* gentlemen. I can say with truth I never enjoyed myself at any party more or I might say as much. There was something so new in a party on board of a ship. The Captain is a very polished man—his name is Ramsey, from Washington. I think perhaps father knew him. The officers were all handsome, polished and agreeable. I am sure if you had been there you would have lost your heart. Give my love to Father, Brother Charles, Aunt Ridgely, Nicholas, Eugene, Aunt Mary, Anna Maria, Emily, Elizabeth and to every person, and do burn this as it is written in great haste. I expect you are sick of hearing from me; this is the third letter I have written since I have been here. My health never was better than it is now. I hope you, my dear Mother, have entirely recovered. I have no time to say more as it is now tea time. I remain dearest Mother & Sister, your truly attached daughter and Sister.

ELIZABETH

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely
Care of Henry Ridgely Esquire
Dover
Delaware]

During 1827 Elizabeth was at school in Philadelphia. Her sister Ann visited there, and toward the close of the year their father, appointed to fill a vacancy in the United States Senate, took up his duties in Washington. With so many of the family away from home, there was frequent reason for correspondence. Four very character-

istic letters, taken from the large number in the collection, have been included here.

Elizabeth Ridgely was now fourteen, Ann twelve, Henry, who had already been "adopted" by his uncle at Eden Hill, ten, Nicholas seven, and Eugene five. Williamina was born in May of that year.

The Hillyards mentioned here are, apparently, the husband, son, and sister-in-law of Sally Ridgely's youngest sister, who was born Mary McKee.

Elizabeth, Helen, Williamina, and Julia were the daughters of "Aunt Wright" and her first husband, John Davis, while the little boys, William and John, were her sons by her marriage to Mr. Wright.

A letter follows from Henry M. Ridgely to Elizabeth:

Dover—29 April 1827

My dear Elizabeth,

I was very much pleased with the letter which you have written to me from Philadelphia, and intended to have answered it long before now; but something or other has always turned up to prevent. Sometimes I have been too busy and sometimes too lazy; sometimes I have forgotten it and at other times had nothing to say, and since its receipt I have spent nine or ten days in New Castle and Wilmington on business. Thus you find that I am not so punctual a correspondent at home as when in Washington; there however I could write by candle light in the morning, and here I oversleep myself and have the sun catching me in bed; there I had none of the cares of the family resting on me and here I have my hands, and my head too, full of them. This morning however I determined to devote an hour to you and shall do so unless company or something else shall unexpectedly interrupt me.

Ann, you know, has always been lazy; she is now worse than ever. It is a hard matter to get her up to breakfast at eight o'clock; this morning before I came downstairs I roused her and told her to get up; after having shaved and washed I went up stairs to change my clothes and found her still in bed and fast asleep. We then determined to let her sleep; your mother and two boys and myself breakfasted by ourselves. The breakfast table was cleared off; the room all set in order and cleared up, and we had been for an hour or more in the garden when Miss Ann, after ten o'clock, paraded in the garden and joined us—I don't know whether Susan waked

her or she roused herself for the want of breakfast. She came to us however in very good humour, having got her *nap*, and that a monstrous long one too, fully out.

We abound now in fine vegetables, spinach, cabbage sprouts, head-lettuce, asparagus in profusion; and radishes we have had in the greatest abundance for more than two weeks; but you will perhaps be surprised when I tell you that the boys have been several times this spring out to Linden and got as many ripe cherries as they wanted. Can Philadelphia equal this? Tell Helen, and ask her if her mouth doesn't water for some of these good things of Kent; the *cherries* I know she would love. We shall by and by have strawberries, apricots, peaches, plums, etc.

Monday 30 April

Thus far I had written yesterday when Mr. Rogers came in and interrupted me. He and Judge Booth and the Chancellor dined with us yesterday. We had a bowl of delightful white large headed lettuce dressed with the oil which we lately got from Philadelphia, which is very good, tho not equal to some that Mr. Wright has heretofore sent us. I don't think Philadelphia can furnish as good lettuce as we had yesterday, and our garden is full of it. If I could only raise the olive so as to make my own oil I should be satisfied with our horticultural production; and this I will someday try to do; tho I fear the result on account of our climate, for I have this morning, with all my winter clothes on, been sitting by a large fire.

On Friday last I took your mother, sisters, Nicholas and Eugene to my farm in Duck Creek Neck where we spent quite a pleasant day; on our return in the evening we stopt at Mr. Hillyard's and saw him, Miss Wootten and Charles; they were and are all well. Charles looked as rosy as dirty and as hardy as one of my boys and just as he ought to have looked.

You know I never talk slander (and as old Mr. Ferguson has frequently told the people here that even the *truth* may sometimes be *slander*, in which I fully agree with him) so I have none of the news of the town to tell you. I hope tho you will find my letter as entertaining without this kind of trash, nay more so, than with it.

Our Court begins today and I shall be much hampered for the succeeding two weeks.

I hope you are most assiduous in your studies and neglect no opportunity of improvement.

Say for me most kindly and affectionately to Mr. and Mrs. Wright, Miss

Hillyard, Elizabeth, Helen, Williamina, Juliet, William, and John and all inquiring friends.

Your most affectionate father
H. M. Ridgely

Sunday 26th. 1827

My dear Child

I received your kind letter by Mrs. Pennywell and I can not tell you half the pleasure its contents gave me. I have thought of giving you a list of the words spelt badly; I think many of your errors in spelling arise from inattention, and not from ignorance, but do pay attention to this particular; it will never do for a young lady not to know how to spell most correctly. Helen spells very well indeed. You say I must not take up too much of my letter in lecturing; I will now drop the subject, but I must mention how much pleasure your application to your studies gives me, and how much my mind is relieved by your going to school. I shall always feel grateful to Mr. Wright and my sister for their parental care over you, my dear Elizabeth—we both owe them a great obligation on your account. I hear a great deal about the beauty of the little stranger up stairs, but cannot hear one word about its name, is it called Toby, Towser or any such fancyfull name, if it is beg your Aunt to change the name & call it Henry Ridgely Wright. I hear a very good account from New Castle, I hope my trouble is over on that account. You must my dear Elizabeth be very saving of money do not make any unnecessary purchases, every cent of money I can spare I save for you, and you must recollect my difficulties in this particular. I spent an hour or two last evening at Mrs. Cowgils, both Mrs. C. and Miss Naudain enquired very particularly after you, the latter intends visiting Philadelphia the week after next, or indeed I think it is next week she mentioned; Miss Denny also is going, Eliza says she will certainly call to see you, she is a lovely girl, and is very much attached to you. She is an acquaintance I wish you to cultivate. You must certainly return Miss Bradford's call. Her mother is a particular friend of mine and also of your father's family. Remember your much respected Cousin Lowber, do visit her when you have leisure.

The news of Dover is not worth communicating to you; it is even lower than common. Ann was delighted with your purchases the present of Oranges were very acceptable from you. I wish you to try your taste and

skill in the purchase of a handsome rocking chair, I wish it gilt and finished suitably for a Parlour. Make the purchase very soon, and get Betsey, your old nurse, to have it put on board of one of our vessels; do not exceed in price two dollars or two fifty. I will remit you the money as soon as the purchase is made. Do attend to it. Tell my niece Helen to assist you. I sent the money immediately to Mr. Patten as soon as I received your letter. Remember me affectionately to your uncle & aunt & cousin. Write soon, once a fortnight will be often enough for you to receive one of your mother's dull letters. I will write by Mr. Cowgill. Do write one of your best letters to your Father & I wish you would take pains and write to your Uncle Ridgely. It will afford both the former & the latter pleasure to receive a letter from you. Your Aunt Ridgely is not well—she looks as if she could not live long.

Ann, Nicholas, and Eugene unite in love to you.

Heaven bless you is the fervent
prayer of your truly affectionate
Mother,

S. Ridgely

[*Addressed to* Miss Elizabeth Ridgely
Care of W. W. Wright Esquire
No. 161 Walnut Street
Philadelphia]

Dover—Monday night 22 Oct. 1827

My dear Ann,

I went to bed on Saturday night just at eleven o'clock, having seen the stage leave here at ten and feeling satisfied that you would have a fair passage to Phila[delphia]. As is my custom I soon fell asleep, and was awakened at half past twelve by a great noise and thumping at my room door; as soon as I could rouse enough to hear I found it was Priscilla at my door who told me there was a cry of fire in the town. I immediately sprang out of bed and threw up one of my windows and on inquiry of some body who was passing was told that the Jail was on fire: I then ran directly to the entry window and saw the flames curling most majestically over the corner of the roof of the Jail. The servants were all roused and as soon as I could dress myself went over to the fire. I immediately went into the Jail for the purpose of rescuing the papers and was lighted by the fire . . . . The pris-

oners were all let out and most of Mr. Fisher's property was saved but the house burned down. The night was remarkably still and the little air there was blew the sparks from the town no house but the Jail itself was burned. It is supposed that one of the prisoners set it afire and today the Grand Jury found a bill of indictment against him for it. It is probable he will be tried tomorrow or next day.

Capt Marly told me you got up to Phila[delphia] safe and that he saw you in a carriage for Mr. Wright's. I hope you all continue well. Liz I suppose was nearly frantic at seeing her mother and you.

We are all well here. Eugene is standing by me now and tells me to say to you that you must bring him "a box that got a tree in it and two men in it with swords going to kill each other and a man hiding round the tree to keep from being killed by the tother man and a trumpet, and a cart that got wheels and with a little horse dragging it," with "wheels under the horse." The box thats got the tree in it, he says, is three cents, the trumpet I must ask the price of from you, and the cart must cost four cents—and thats all he says just now. He says again you must bring him a little bird in a cage . . . .

Nick has gone to bed. Give my most affectionate love to your mother and say for me most kindly to Mr. & Mrs. Wright and family. Tell Liz to write to me—and tell her that I will shortly write to her.

You can't read this letter with all the help you can get I fear.

Your most affectionate father.

H.M.R.

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely
Care of W. W. Wright, Esq'r.
No. 161 Walnut Street
Phila.]

The next letter from Henry M. Ridgely was a Christmas letter from Washington.

Washington—25th. December 1827

My dear Ann,

I wish you a merry and a happy Christmas and a great many happy and prosperous returns of it. It would give me great delight to be now at home and spend this Christmas with your dear Mother brothers and sisters and yourself. I hope however that you may all spend it very happily and pros-

perously without me; tho I trust that I shall be "in your flowing cups freshly remembered." Our standing toast at our dinner table every day is "our absent friends"; this we all drink, and this is almost all we do drink for we are the most sober set of men that were ever collected together. You will see from this toast of ours, that every day you are all "in my flowing cup freshly remembered." This far I had written when I was called to breakfast; on going into the breakfast room, which I entered just as the other gentlemen got in, we perceived on a side table a fine large bowl flowing with the richest egg-nog, which some of the family without the knowledge of any one of us, had prepared and placed there for us surrounded with clean tumblers and surmounted with a silver ladle; we are such water drinkers that none of us was tempted to touch it and at first we all declined the tempting beverage; on consultation however and advice we concluded that it would not be consistent with good manners to refuse what had been prepared for us with so much care; we therefore out of compliment barely tasted it and pronounced it as fine egg-nog as was ever made. How would you have liked a little of it? But I suppose you had some at home.

I yesterday received your letter of the 21st instant and am very much pleased with it.—It is written with care and very much what a family letter should be. You should write to me at least every week and tell me all the news of the family and of the town—writing freely just as subjects present themselves to your mind and taking care that your words are correctly spelled. It will be of great service and in a little while give you an ease and facility in writing from which you may hereafter derive the greatest advantage. I hope that you pay great attention to your studies and spend no idle time. Let history be closely attended to and pay particular regard to your mother's instructions. Let me know in your next when you go to bed and at what hour you rise in the morning. You ought to go to bed and rise at the same time your mother does. Do, my dearest Ann, improve every moment of your time—read much and ponder much, think clearly and think correctly—and you need never be afraid to go into any company.

Tell Nicholas and Eugene that I very often brag of them and wish that they were here. They must continue to be good boys and mind their books and never miss going to school. They must also learn speeches and speak

them very often both at home and at school. I will buy them some very clever books and send them if any opportunity offers; or bring them home with me when I return. They must be at the head of their class and the favorite of Mr. Strong.

Kiss little Will for me and tell her she must grow fast and be a good little child and must not forget me before I return.

Tell Charles I wish him to send me a list of the names of all the members of the Senate and House of Representatives of Delaware, as far as he can procure it, which I suppose he might do at once, and also to write to me of the proceedings of the Legislature very frequently.

To your mother I send my kindest regards and most affectionate love.

To your uncle and aunts I send my best wishes.

To all inquiring friends I wish health and happiness.

And to you I send this letter in token of a father's fondest love.

H. M. Ridgely

Elizabeth more than once mentions the receipt of anonymous letters. If her Father was able to trace the writer, he does not in any letter disclose the person's name. The letters frightened the girl and annoyed the family.

February 15th Friday 1828

My dear Father

On Monday morning last I received your letter of the eighth and I als[o] received the paper you sent me. I read Mr. T. P. Moore's letter and so did all the girls, I have not yet had time to read the rest, I hope Jackson will be elected for your sake for I know you are very anxious for it, my dear Father I am as obedient to Mrs. Grelaud as I can be I do every thing to please her and she is very kind as much so as I wish her to be, she says' I have improved very much, she says' I always know my lessons which I always do. I hope yet you will be able to prove the handwriting of that anonymous letter, you say in your letter be he whom he may, you will certainly hold him in uter contempt. You need not of made that remark for I have not the least idea who it is, and I am sure if I knew who it is I should inform you. The letters have all been so insulting not like a man of honour would write, but I sincerely hope that is the last. I hope my dear Father

you will not make yourself the least uneasy about them for I will send them on to you immediately. I supose in May I shall have the pleasure of seeing you when you will return hom[e] it will give Mother so much pleasure to have you with her as well as the rest of the family, I shall be perfectly happy when I return home for I am very tiard of a boarding school, we have just come up from tea, we have no vari'ty here it is study eat and sleep all of the time, we rise very early, Mrs. Grelaud is as attentive as any one can be to all of the young ladies her eyes are every where she is the most watchful woman I ever saw if one of us is missing for more than a few moments at a time she is uneasy until she finds us and then she must know what we have been doing she will not let us go to our chamber after prayers in the morning and the last thing at night she must see that we are all well and that we are all covered over. Last week I was invited to a party at the Miss Rodneys, Aunt Wright sent for me to go with her and Cousin Elizabeth, Aunt Wright said she would take good care of me and said that the Miss Rodneys were particular friends of Mothers for Aunt Wright knew I was very anxious to go and therefore said everything to persuade Mrs. Grelaud to let me go, but it had no effect on Mrs. Grelaud, yes it had for when she was gone Mrs. Grelaud scolded me for letting my cousin Elizabeth ask her, she said I knew her ruls, and knew they were not to be broken. I had to give it up and be contented for I knew it would not do to appear disapointed in this. I will enclose Mrs. Grelaud's bill, I have no news to tell you. Philadelphia is very gay there is a great many parties I have been at none myself but constantly hear of them. Mr. Vincent Bradford visits us very frequently on Saturday evening, Uncle Wright will not let Cousin Elizabeth stay in the room to help me entertain him with a great deal of persuasion he will let Helen come in and I had as lieve have no person for she does not speak one word . . . of the time last Saturday I drank tea at Mr. Bradfords you know V. B. has quite sufficient gift of the gab himself but I do not think he finds a very pleasent companion in me for when ever he comes I do not feel in a talking moode.

Your affectionate
Daughter ELIZABETH

[*Addressed to* The Honourable Henry M. Ridgely
United States Senator
Washington
D.C.]

To Elizabeth Ridgely from her aunt, Elizabeth Wright:

Thursday evening

My Dear Elizabeth,

I've but a few minutes to write you but I know you will pardon my short letter when I tell you ever since I received yours, I've been busy for you, and your Dear Mother. I bespoke your hat immediately and now send it to you hoping it may certainly please you; one ostrich feather is the newest fashion, but we have to get a richer feather being but one, tell Mother it will suit any atmosphere and with such a face under it will be admired in any. The two bills for hat, and feather I send—and these gloves I send. The veil is a new article the blond gauze it is more becoming than any lace and is the newest article. I got one for E in preference to lace. I purchased materials at Conny's and made you a Decanco cape. They are very fashionable, and very handsome and graceful in their effect. It has made it come so much cheaper to you than buying it made, but My Dear Niece I've worked so hard for you that every bone in me aches. I had all the lace to wash, after makeing it before it was put together. They are worn without any thing but the heart and cross around the neck or a ribband tied around the neck—your hat worn down in the neck behind, flairing in front and a little one sided.

Tell your mother I received her money, all is right in our accounts. I bought worsted with all the change left after paying the bill and myself—we are square. The veil I bought at Conny's and had it charged. It was $1..25 cts. her blinds I think she will get next week. Charles is very steady, in haste my Love, do not write me such affectionate letters; I am affraid I shall work myself to death for you I love you too much. My love to Dear Sister.

Your truly affectionate Aunt

E W

I shall expect a long letter from you
saying how you like your things immediately

The reason for the hat and feather, the cape and furbelows was the approaching inauguration of President Jackson! Elizabeth was all excitement. She and her cousin were to accompany her mother to Washington for the gayety.

Meanwhile Ann remained in Dover, perhaps wistfully, with little Williamina.

The following letter describes the fatiguing journey to Washington that Sally Ridgely made with her daughter Elizabeth and Elizabeth Davis, her niece, and the solicitude she felt for Ann and little "Willie," left at home with their aunt at Eden Hill Farm. The stop over night at Mrs. Cummins' in Smyrna, "Belmont Hall," seems strange to a traveller today. From Dover to Belmont is a ride of about twenty minutes in a motor car. In February 1829 with indifferent horses it perhaps took three hours.

Washington February 17th 1829
Tuesday

We arrived here last evening after a most fatigueing ride and the weather extremely cold. I will commence my letter my dear Ann with the commencement of my journey here, we arrived in the first place, in Smyrna, where we remained all night, I staid at Mrs. Cummins' and received every attention she could bestow, but nothing could prevent my mind from thinking of my dear Children at home, my own little Will was always before me, and made me feel very unhappy. After leaving Smyrna at an early hour we travelled on quite comfortably and reached Wilmington at four O'clock. Mrs. Wales and Mrs. Hall both called on me and pressed me to stay with them, but I preferred remaining at the Tavern, that I might be in complete readiness to meet the girls and Mr. Bradford, they arrived on Saturday Morning about ten O'clock, and we set off for this place, you will be surprized when I tell you we were travelling all night, and did not reach Baltimore until Sunday Morning at three O'Clock. We found your Father there sitting up for us. I felt too unwell to leave Baltimore until Monday—which considerably delayed our journey, however we arrived here safe at last, and I hope tomorrow to feel myself again. Indeed my dearest Ann, you have missed nothing by complying with your Father's wishes and remaining at home, it is all form and ceremony here. I have been twice interrupted by Company already and have just sent word I was not at home. I am really too tired to see company. I did intend to write to your dear Aunt Ridgely and tell her I will write to her tomorrow. I never can repay her, for her motherly kindness to my Children, particularly to little Willy. The

first night I could not think of anything but the trouble my Children would be to your Aunt and Uncle. I hope I shall have a better pen when I write to your Aunt, and when I write again to you. I was very much disappointed you and your Aunt Mary did not receive your dresses. It was your Aunt Wright's fault in not sending them.

Write me soon. I am so anxious to hear from you all. Give my love to my dear little boys, and kiss Will over and over again for me. I need not tell you to be obedient to your Uncle and Aunt. I know my dear good Ann will always be mindful of what an affectionate friend wishes her to do.

Your Father is in the Senate. If he was here I know he would unite with me in love to all.

God bless you my dear Child
is the sincere prayer of your
affectionate Mother.

S. Ridgely

You must really burn this.
It is so badly written.

To Elizabeth from Charles George:

Philadelphia February 28th 1829

My dear Sister

I received yesterday your kind letter, and, as it was the first it had an additional pleasure. We had been so long expecting one from you, that we were more than usually pleased with its receipt. Do continue and give us a journal of the events which come under your inspection, without any regard to the beauties of style or the elegance of composition. A letter should contain the first thoughts which cross the mind, expressed in the most simple and easy manner. Following this rule, you, who are surrounded by so much society and enjoying so much company can find no difficulty in filling up a sheet. There is a rumor in Philadelphia this morning, that a duel has taken place between Eaton and Clay, in which the latter has been shot, and that Branch has wounded Tazewill also. What foundation there is for such reports, I know not, but it is probable that the Southern Mail will corroborate or deny the report. I need not mention to you, that the cabinet of the President Elect, has not given universal satisfaction. It is true that Jackson has been compelled (I may say) to appoint to office,

men from those influential states which gave him support. Yet Ingham is not much more than a politician, and Eaton than a Biographer. Branch is not universally known. They even in my opinion, want weight of character. I do not think that the experiment we are trying in our government should be entirely new. Mr. Livingston of Louisiana, Langdon Cheves of Pennsylvania, Drayton or Tazewill, might I think have been substituted for some now named, and more satisfaction have been given. Yet I hope that every thing will go on well. I forget, in writing to you, that I must not enter into politics. So I will change my style and give you the news fashionable of the city. Yesterday, I made several calls upon the young ladies of our acquaintance. They were all well and all made particular enquiries after you and Cousin. Your situation has been the envy of them all. Miss Shivers was particularly pleased, when I gave an account of the great pleasure you experienced in seeing General Jackson. He really appears to have become a great favorite of yours. I saw him some years ago in Baltimore, and was forcibly struck even then by his appearance. His features became so fixed in my memory that I think I remember them perfectly. His countenance indicates much of the fatigue and exertion, which he has undergone. This evening, I am invited you certainly would in vain guess where, to a *soireé* at Mr. Tods next door. I anticipate a very dull and silent evening party. French you know is the only language to be spoken until 10 o'clock, and as many who will attend will be almost entirely unacquainted with that language, they will be compelled to remain silent. This I believe would be a most severe punishment to you, who cannot enjoy a party without conversation. I scarcely know how I shall acquit myself, yet, I will make an effort to interest the company, and I hope, I shall not be unsuccessful. This invitation, I must e'en consider a very high compliment, not to me, but to my knowledge of the French, for had I not possessed this, I presume I might have been a neighbour to our fair ladies, and not ever have been met with the smile of acquaintance. Yet if I be fortunate now, I shall be greeted, I think, with some degree of cordiality. *Allons toujour, vive la gaiete*' Cousin will translate this french for you. I intend to practice for an hour before I go, to get my mouth in the French *manière de parler* and then *tout ira bien.* But enough of this jargon. I must now conclude not so much from want of ideas, as from want of time. Give my affectionate love to my mother & father, and to Cousin E, whom I will honor

with a letter next time. All unite in love. Aunt has told you I presume all the news of Dover. Do write, and at once to Mr. Wright, it is a duty you owe him.

Your affectionate brother,
C. G. RIDGELY

Let me hear from you at once
you can write two letters very
easily.

Aunt has just received Mother's letter and will answer immediately. Nothing new since dinner.

C. G. RIDGELY.

[*Addressed to* Miss Ridgely
Washington City]

Mrs. Ridgely wrote again to her daughter Ann from Washington, a short time after.

Monday March 2d 1829

My dearest Ann,

I do sincerely thank you for your two affectionate letters, and having a little leizure I determined to write to you today, though you will not receive my letter any sooner than if I were to delay writing till tomorrow. I have so little command of time, I am compelled to steal from company whenever I [read or] write. Your last letter giving me an account of Mrs. Bishops sudden death shocked me greatly, it was sometime before I could feel cheerful. I hope your Aunt Ridgely is restored to health and that you, dear little Will, and my dear little boys are all well. My visit is drawing to a close and I shall soon have the pleasure of being with my beloved children. I expect to take you all some handsome presents particularly yourself. The girls have frolicked a good deal, I have refused all invitations to parties, I intend to make an exception, this evening there is a bridal party given next door in honour to Mr. & Mrs. Turner who were married a few evenings ago, the bride was a Miss Key of Georgetown. Our Mess are all invited, which now consists of sixteen, we have had recently the addition of young Barbour of Virginia, and Jerome Buonaparte—they are both fine young men. We have been introduced to General Jackson, and

the ladies of his household, Mrs. Donalson, and Miss Easton, they [are] nieces of his wife, and dressed in full mourning. I shall have a great deal to tell you when I see you. We expect to go to the Senate this morning. I will tomorrow add a little more to this letter. Your father has not yet decided on a day to set off, (Tuesday) I think though as his time expires to day, he will be impatient to return home, he does not talk of leaving here before Saturday. I was heartily tired of the party last evening, and returned home by ten o'clock, every one almost, stands up in the middle of the floor, and you become heartily tired of the continued buz, there was no dancing, but a great many distinguished ladies and men, I have my dear Ann outlived the day of taking pleasure in the gay and heartless scenes of the gay world. I have purchased you a beautiful rose coloured grenadeen, more expensive and more beautiful than the Bareige.

I received your affectionate letter enclosing your uncle's hair, your father received your Uncle's letter at the same time, praising you very highly, his good opinion is worth having. Tomorrow is the great inaugural day, and such a crowd as will be here. I am delighted to hear such a good character of Serena, I shall not forget to take her a present.

Twice poor Helen has been to see us, and I have been placed under the necessity of sending her away almost immediately, our mess is too large to accomodate her, it has cost me twelve dollars & half to get her back again, I have really been provoked with Mrs. Porter for placing me in such a situation.

My wretched pen makes me write a very bad hand, which you must not imitate. Your father was particularly pleased with your last letter there was not one word spelt wrong, Give my affectionate love to your Aunt & Uncle Ridgely.

Kiss little Will fifty times for me, I am so anxious to see her, remember me most affectionately to my dear little boys.

I remain my dear Anna
Your affectionate Mother
S. Ridgely

Do burn this.

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

From a daughter of Senator Barbour of Virginia to Elizabeth:

Frascati, April the 26th, 1829

My dear Elizabeth

Mama request[s] that you will present her thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Ridgely for their kind recollection of her. The plants were received in nice order; she is in hopes most of them will live.

I cannot think that we met last winter, never to see each other again; I hope fate will ordain otherwise; Should your father think fit to do so I hope he will supply the vacancy in the senate occasioned by the removal from it of Mr. McLane. Mama and brother Thomas join me in love and respect to yourself and parents.

Your friend

PHILIPPA BARBOUR

P.S. Papa is not at home, or he would have joined us in being remembered to the family.

P.B.

[*Addressed to* Miss Elizabeth Ridgely
Dover, Delaware, from Miss Philippa Barbour
near Gordonsville
Orange County
Virginia]

Since some of Ann Ridgely's great grandchildren live near "Frascati" at the time this volume is being arranged, it seems interesting to include this letter written by Philippa Barbour.

The letter which follows was one of many that Elizabeth Ridgely received from ardent but by no means acceptable suitors. Some of the swains wrote in verse or a distant approach to it. This one is included not for any literary merit, but because it is typical of the lovelorn young men of those Victorian days.

New Castle May 10, 1830

Miss Ridgely,

When I first become acquainted with you I had not the most distant idea of ever entertaining for you that sentiment which has now become a part of

my being. I was pleased with your Society and conversation, and charmed by the innocency of your heart, and our frequent meetings were always from the first sources of great pleasure to me, and I flattered myself not wholly displeasing to yourself. At length to be near you—to look upon you and listen to your accents filled me with happiness, until the unwelcome thought that soon, perhaps very soon the charm would be broken and the dream dissolved began to mingall with the cup of my felicity. I reflected upon my situation as to fortune and in my then circumstances, thought it almost a crime to think of making serious proposals for your favour. But I had as I then thought well grounded hopes of soon seeing a material change in my prospects and determined should those hopes be realized to sue for a return of affection. I more than once intimated this determination to you in language which I am sure you understood. I will refer your recollection to perhaps the first time I endeavour'd to speak so as to convey to you the idea of my feelings and future intentions. It was on one Sabbath morning nearly a year ago, when I joined you on your way to the Methodist Church an hour before the time for preaching, which time you agreed to pass away in a walk; on our return from which, while standing in the yard of the meeting house our conversation turned upon the subject of matrimony, and I informed you that were my party successful and should I as I expected receive a certain appointment, I intended to offer my hand to a lady who was already in possession of my heart. I thought at the time you understood what lady I meant, and from your manner I had no reason to believe you were disspleased. That hour was among the happiest of my wayward life. I was cruelly disappointed in all my hopes, and conceiving it a duty I owed to you as well as to myself from that moment began to strive to get the better of my passion. But vain have been all my efforts. I have for weeks together avoided your Company, but without relief—you are present in all my waking moments, and frequently in the hours of repose the subject of my dreams. And I now find that nothing can give me relief from my present state of anxiety, but an avowal of a reciprocal feeling on your part, which I scarsly dare to hope for or a knowledge of your indifference toward me. You well know, that I have nothing to offer but a heart which is already yours, and which under all circumstances must ever continue so, although the result of this communication may perhaps forever banish me from your presence. No one can tell me better than I myself know the many disad-

vantages under which I labour, and the various reasons which will naturally suggest themselves, against the accomplishment of the end of my wishes in this respect. Yet my passion stronger than every other consideration prompts me to make the essay, and if I fail, I can be in no worse situation as it regards my feelings than I am at present, for although hope may wholly depart from me my doubts will be also at an end. I am sure you have not a doubt of my exclusive devotion to yourself and to you alone, and it is therefore unnecessary at this time to multiply profession which I have often heretofore made, I will therefore at once come to the point which I had in view when I commenced this letter. I have adopted the expedient of writing to you from this place, because a favourable opportunity for a full disclosure of my sentiments has not recently occurred, and because when in your presence, for the few moments we ever have passed alone, I have felt too intensely, to speak the dictates of my heart. I shall remain at New Castle all this week. May I presume to request you to acknowledge through the medium of the Post Office this communication, and that you will inform whether on my return to Dover I may venture to address you in the language of love, or whether I must resign all hope of ever being able to inspire you with sentiment toward myself. A letter lodged in the Post Office at Dover directed to me at New Castle will reach me the next day. If you condescend to write you may if you please omit to sign your name—the subject will sufficiently inform me who is the author.

I have written without any view to the correctness of the composition, my whole aim being to render myself intelligible and to bring to a speedy conclusion the doubts and fears that agitate my heart. If I have been presumptious, in consideration of our former [friendship] pardon me, and believe me ever yours,

WILLIAM HUFFINGTON

It is a shock to turn from the childish letters of Elizabeth Ridgely and the picture of extreme youth and gayety they bring to mind, and then to learn in the following letter, written three years later, that she had died. It is said that she had measles followed by a very severe chest cold. A cough became chronic and she died from what at that time was called rapid consumption. The brother Henry who wrote on hearing of Elizabeth's death frequently speaks of "Aunt" or "Aunt

Ridgely." This lady was the wife of Chancellor Nicholas Ridgely. Nicholas married Mary Brereton. Their home was Somerville near Duck Creek while Charles Ridgely's second wife, Ann Moore, lived. After her death Nicholas inherited Eden Hill Farm as his father's oldest son; he made it his home. There were no children of Nicholas and Mary's marriage. Henry one morning left his father's home on Dover Green and appeared at his uncle's door telling him he wished to come and live there. This in fact he did. The uncle and aunt made him their heir, and after the uncle's death the aunt continued to educate him.

St. Mary's College Tuesday February 19th 1833.

My dearest Mother,

It was with feelings of the deepest regret & sorrow, that I received father's letter of the 15th mentioning the death of my dearly beloved sister Elizabeth. Although it was a sorrowful event which I expected to happen shortly, yet, I did not think that it would happen as soon as it did. When I received father's letter about two weeks since, mentioning that she had been confined to her bed for several days, then indeed, I knew that the crisis of her disease was rapidly approaching, & that I should never have the pleasure of seeing her again, & I could not help shedding tears to think of her untimely fate. Mr. Eccleston sent for me in the afternoon of the day in which he received the letter, whilst I was in class. When I entered his room he received me with usual good humour, & invited me to sit down; but his countenance soon changed, when he asked me the health of my sister, at the receipt of my last letter, which I answered as I had heard; I instantly knew what was to follow, & when at last he said, "she is gone," I burst into tears, & taking father's letter left his room, & as he had excused me from class, I went to my cell, there to read it. I could not help reflecting on the kind manner with which she had always treated me, & on the love which she had always manifested to me, on every occasion. And I am certain that my love was reciprocated; I have always paid her every attention, & every mark of love, that was in my power, & have always had the happiness to think, that if any one on earth loved me, it was my dear, dear, doubly dear Sister, Elizabeth; I always tried (though my trials were unsuccessful) to dispel the fears which she entertained respecting her disease, although I knew that in a few months, she would be added to the long cata-

logue of victims, of that fell destroyer of the youth of our country—Consumption. When I left home, & gave her that last, last, parting kiss, I could not but entertain her feelings that this would be our last parting . . . Farewell, a long, a last farewell to my beloved, to my esteemed, to my——— departed sister!

Mother, I must take the privilege of . . . some dear memento of her whom I so dearly esteem. Last summer, my dear Sister promised me the miniature of Grandmother, which you presented to her, if I cannot have that allow me to ask for one of her bed-quilts, which she made during her illness. The miniature I would prefer, as a memento of Grandmother, as a memento of you, & as a memento of that one whom I cannot too highly praise.

I would also ask or rather beg another privilege, which perhaps you may think foolish & bold. As we have about two weeks holiday at Easter, I would beg the favour of returning home, to spend it there. I have become quite homesick lately, and if you will allow me to return home then, I will promise you to return as soon as the term is expired, & to renew my studies with redoubled ardour, although (without flattering myself) I have the character of a hard student at present. I leave it entirely to the disposal of Aunt & Father. I suppose you have heard of the burning of the Museum in Baltimore, I have not room to mention it here.

Give my love to my dear Aunt, & tell her that I shall write to her in a few days. Present my love to father, to Sister Ann, & to the rest of the family, & would to God, I could say to my dear Sister Elizabeth. And believe me to be

my dear Mother, your most
affectionate son
H. Ridgely

The following letter written in June, 1833, to Ann Ridgely was begun by her mother, but she found herself unable to complete it. Sally had not been well since the birth of Edward, her fifteenth child. The shock of Elizabeth's death added to her debility. She had, moreover, all her life to contend with progressively defective vision. There is no later letter from her pen, and this one was completed by Charles George.

June 3, 1833

My beloved Child.

You know full well the difficulty I have in writing, and will therefore appreciate the effort. You have no idea the pleasure and gratitude I feel to your Wilmington and New Castle friends for their attention to you, and do my dear Ann consult Mrs. Wales and Kitty in everything you feel at a loss; they will both advise you right. (You must excuse crooked lines) Since your absence I have been gloomy, your dear Sister's image is ever present to my view, She was too dear to my heart, but indeed I can with truth say, God's will be done. I think weeping injures my eyes. Thus far my dear Ann, had mother written, and that you may have perhaps the last lines which she may ever write, I prefer concluding her letter, than to recommence one. Mother would certainly have finished this letter herself but the continual interruption which she has met with and the necessity of preparing for some company, this evening, have prevented her. I cannot conceal from you, that the day after your departure, Mother seemed more than usually to dispond. The recollection of our Sister, brought more vividly to her mind by your departure, and the loneliness of her situation, operated strongly to produce gloom and dispondency. Since that day however, she has appeared more cheerful, and the exercise which in cleaning the house, she was compelled to take, diverted her thoughts from the train which they had taken.

I have nearly as many commissions to deliver to you as you had to charge me with. I thought when I came to one part of your letter that I had better take it in hand and visit each house in the Town, telling the occupants to read for themselves. It was a long catalogue of "Tell Aunt M. and tell Aunt R. and tell Aunt Mary! and with how many more *tellings*, I cannot tell! but, my dear Ann, I told all, and will ever be pleased to execute commissions from you, especially when in doing so I am the bearer of good news.

The session of the High Court of Errors and Appeals has imparted some little life to Dover. Yesterday evening, I *had the pleasure*— (if pleasure there was) to meet Miss Abigail Barber and Miss Wills at Aunt Morris. Several Gentlemen were present; Mr. Wales, Mr. Layton of Sussex. We, that is the gentlemen, having become somewhat interested in a discussion on the comparative merits of Canals, Rail Roads and McAdamized Turn-

pikes, entirely forgot the presence of the Better half of *rational creation* (by the by, Ann, it may be a question how much of reason that part in Dover possess) who to punish us for our want of gallantry did not even open their lips and very soon adjourned to an adjoining room, and left us to politics, Segars, and Strikingly Colored little-talk. Well! I will as I am to meet the same ladies this evening put on my very best looks, manners and languages, and if the acid but rather pretty looking mouth of Miss Abigail can be forced to relax into a gentle smile (for I have not the vanity to hope for a laugh) I will e'en try to compel it. I have sometimes been fortunate enough to win a smile from the lip of beauty, why despair here then? and moreover, according to the proverb which I must approve of, "nil disperandum," liberally translated into English "Faint heart ne'er won fair lady" —But if I continue such badinage—(I wish Ann, you understood French, it is so fashionable now a days to view our good old English, by paltry and wire drawn French phrazes) I mean if I do not write something sensible, I shall not have room for the Commissions. So I'll finish them and if there is space, I will just say what I please.

Tell Mrs. Wales, that although her affectionate letters still remain unanswered, My Mother most earnestly begs a continuance of them and that she will endeavor to have them answered. From no correspondence does she derive such pleasure as from the letters which she receives from her; the tone of deep interest, of pure friendship with which these letters abound carries a charm, that ordinary correspondence is altogether alien to. She therefore begs Mrs. Wales to continue them.

Mother desires you to call on your Aunt Banning, before you leave Wilmington even should you be compelled to hire a conveyance there. Father wishes you to comply with your engagements in New Castle; he will call for you sometime after the Court, and will bring Miss Black down with you—at least thus he talks.

I have something like five hundred commissions of love, which as I am an entire stranger to that sentiment, feeling, passion, or what ever you may be pleased to call it (I might now quote a most appropriate latin sentiment if it were fashionable) I know not how to deliver. You are aware that I am condemned to hopeless celibacy, alas for me no cheerful and animated countenance will bless my return to the evening hearth, no child climb the

knee, " the envious kiss to share"—but dull and lifeless and unsung, will pass the even tenor of my life.

Leonard has been the constant companion of the boys. Eugene says he is a fine little fellow, but that Travella Jackson can beat him running and that he himself can beat Travella. Leonard in reply states that he could beat Eugene in climbing if the bark of the tree did not hurt his feet, as it is, he thinks Eugene can get along rather better than he. He appears quite pleased and is a very great favorite.

Williamina duly acknowledges the receipt of her letter and as her time is entirely engaged, I am apprehensive she may call upon her brother, (as usual), to answer it!

And now, my dear Ann, having exhausted every little trifling and indeed uninteresting particular I must conclude by requesting you to present mother's most affectionate love to Mrs. Wales and Miss Reese. It would be utterly impossible for me to express, so as to convey, all her feelings. Deep gratitude for her kindness, and the strongest affection, enhanced by long cherished acquaintance, seem ever to animate her at the mention of their names. You have a Carte-blanche to use any expression of tenderness, and I will be your security, that it will come far short of her real feelings. I have had half a mind to tell you that nobody sent their love to you, but as you would not believe me, were I to do so, I will say, that everyone, my dear Sister, participates in your pleasure, and feels thankful to those friends who have been instrumental in producing it and amongst them, though many show more, few feel more than

Your affectionate Brother
C. G. Ridgely

I suppose my letter would not be finished without adding a postscript—

Be particular to give Mother's love to Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Banning. Leonard remains with us as much as Mother can prevail upon him to do and is as I have mentioned a very great favorite. Aunt R sends her love. Visit Emily before you leave Wilmington. Aunt R expresses the warmest thanks to you for your kindness toward Emily. Leonard says he is not disappointed and sends his love to his mother, but does not know when he will return.

To Ann from Henry:

Baltimore Wednesday June 19th 1833.

My dear Sister,

I received Father's letter of the 10th inst[ant] together with the money which Aunt sent me, safely. And as I have had no time to spare, I could not answer it before. I was very much obliged to her for it, but we could not have our dinner as we intended, on account of several boys leaving the party. However, I was very glad that they left, as I had my money employed in a great deal more pleasant manner, than in eating & drinking all day, viz: in going on the Baltimore & Ohio railroad as far as Ellicott's Mills. As soon as I was told that the number of boys was too small to bear the expense of a dinner, I formed another party to take a trip on the railroad, & getting three other students together with two of the teachers, we started at half past nine in the morning, & returned at half past five in the afternoon. The road is as handsome & as pleasant a one, as I have ever travelled, and the village of Ellicott's Mills is a beautiful little place, containing a first rate country hotel. It is fifteen miles distant from Baltimore, & the road lies through hills covered with trees; at the bottom of the hill for the distance of 5 or 6 miles, a beautiful stream runs along, directly beneath the railroad. There is not a more handsome place near Baltimore, & the improvements that have been made by the keeper of the hotel are such as cannot fail to render it a delightful spot. He has displayed a great deal of taste in the manner in which the garden is made. The parapet walls, rising one above the other, to support the terraces, resemble a place made expressly for a fortification. Nothing is more pleasant than a walk through this romantic garden. It is situated about fifty feet above the rail-road, which runs directly beneath it. At the top of the garden they are building a dwelling house, after the style of a Gothic Cottage, if it is built according to the manner of the plan that was shown to me it will be a splendid house. The attractions to this beautiful spot are many. The village is situated among the hills with as pure an atmosphere as could be breathed; the hotel is very large & commodious, containing some very large & airy rooms, & the dining room is said to be sufficiently large to contain 200 persons. The village is divided by a stream which keeps several different kinds of mills in motion, & it is a very fashionable resort during the summer; I might

safely say that I have not spent a more pleasant day since I have been in Baltimore.

General Jackson passed through town a week ago, with his suite. As the number of boys was too large for all to go & pay their respects to him, Mr. Eccleston selected ten, to go & shake hands with him & deliver him their compliments as representatives of the College. Well, we went & shook hands with him, but when we were about to deliver our compliments, we were prevented on account of the arrival of Black-Hawk & the other Indians who were to have an interview with him, at which we had the honour of remaining. I stood but a few inches from Black-Hawk & the Prophet, & had a very fine opportunity of seeing them. Black-Hawk is a small, thin, old man about my size. Although I have seen so many accounts of his noble & fine looks, yet I was struck with nothing about him except his fine forehead, his head being partly bald; on the contrary, I thought that his look betokened lack of talent, but seemed to have a great deal of firmness, & he appeared to me more like some old negro that I have seen somewhere, than the second Indian Warrior of North-America, & surpassed only by Tecumseh. But his son was the finest looking man I ever saw, & his eye was so piercing, that he seemed to be almost able *to look a hole through a two inch plank*, he was large, & seemed very active. The Prophet was a *very* large man; he entered the room first, Black-Hawk next, and the other Indians followed them. When Jackson spoke to them by the means of an interpreter, the Prophet advanced toward him first shaking him by the hand, & answered him in a speech which was very animated, it was not the same as you have seen in the papers, but every part was connected, & it was delivered with very appropriate gestures; he called upon the Manatoa or Great Spirit several times to witness the truth of what he was saying, & even said that he urged the Indians to war, but that he did not know he was doing wrong. Black-Hawk did not say one word, except when the Prophet or interpreter spoke, when he would breathe out an "ugh" occasionally. When the interview was over they all shook Jackson by the hand, and retired.

I saw the other day that Miss A. Cummings was married. Give my love to all of father's family, Ned a kiss, Willy a smack, & *Gene* a cent, & likewise to Aunt, & remember me to Miss Maria, I really forgot Miss Wilson, do present her with my love—no indeed! not my love, but my respects.

Tomorrow the examination of all the classes will commence, & the vacation is not four weeks off, but you are as yet undetermined as to your trip; indeed, Ann, you are a strange being; it seems as if you are not fond of novelty but you will travel over places where you have been before, you will visit the sandy soil of Sussex, & Balt[imore] which you have never seen, Baltimore the third city of the Union you care not to visit. Strange! Strange! Strange!— Your Affect[ionate]

Conqueror in Chess
H. Ridgely

St. Mary's College October 3rd 1834

My dear Ann

I received your chronicle of important events by yesterday's mail, and I will now exchange one evil for another, by laying aside old Plato, & writing you an answer, but of the two evils, I must confess that I think the latter to be much the greater. I had intended to write to you before, but I thought that I would ask whether I ought to do it or not, & upon doing so I found that the advice which was given to me, corresponded so much with my own natural inclination, that I thought I would defer it, but shortly after, your letter was handed to me, & of course the advice became null & void.

Well, to begin, I will follow the same order that you observed, by giving you a short outline of my travels from home to home. You know perhaps, that when I made my exit from the hall-door, the old clock began to strike the hour of seven, as if wishing to celebrate my departure by a noisy farewell. Ned ran before me to Biddle's, & when he heard the whip crack, he began to laugh heartily, & his countenance seemed to say that he would like to have been in my place, taking a ride. There were only four passengers between Dover & Smyrna, but all the vacant seats were filled with musquitoes, which swarmed in thousands in the stage. Fortunately, I was on the windward side of the stage, & was not very much troubled with them. At Smyrna, we received three more passengers, two ladies & a man, who was, as the sailors term such, half seas over. He was exceedingly loquacious & I may confidently say, the greatest bragadocio I ever saw. He had his pistols & dagger, & was boasting that he would kill any man that would

touch him; I found out, however, from himself, that he had been in many scrapes, but that some how or other, there was always something to prevent him from killing his adversary. Of course none of us were petrified through fear of him. We went along very well to St. Georges, where we waited about half an hour for the stages; but when they did come, we found that there was no room for Mr. Emory & myself. Here was a difficulty at last. But this was soon solved by Read, the tavern keeper, who took us over without any extra expense. We arrived at the Kentucky, where we soon had a fine dinner, & a large number of passengers to consume it. The rest of our passage was pleasant; the day was clear, the wind gentle, & the Chesapeake pretty smooth. I went to Barnum's as soon as I landed, & was put into a very good room with two others. But the supper was really, without any exaggeration, mean; & seemed to have been composed of the remnants of other meals. I went to bed early & was glad of it afterwards: for my roommates, rose very early to go off to Philadelphia: & they, together with Barnum's prattling servants made so much noise, that I found it impossible for me to sleep any longer. I have got enough of Barnum's now, & I then re-solved that he should have the honour of my company no longer. Soon after breakfast, I rode up to the College. Mr. Chanche has been appointed to succeed Mr. Eccleston, & Mr. Hoskynns, who was in College with brother Charles, is Vice-President. He is rather young for such an office the duties of which are by no means light; but as many of them have been entrusted to the Treasurer & other gentlemen, I suppose that he will be able to fill it with honour. Mr. Eccleston has been ordained Bishop, but still remains in College, & teaches his old classes, of Moral Philosophy, Economy, & Elocution. Moral Philosophy is divided into two parts, the Latin which is taught by Mr. Chanche, & the English by Mr. E. The gold chain & cross, (which a Catholic Bishop wears) add very much to his appearance.

The classes in which I have been placed for the present year, are Moral Philosophy, Geometry & Trigonometry, the first class of Greek, first class of French, Elocution, & the 4th class of Spanish, which I have just commenced. Latin & Rhetoric, I finished last year.

George Fisher is well, & does very well. He was reported first in two of his classes last week, & does well in all. He is not in very high classes how-

ever. They are, I think, the third Latin, fourth Greek, Fifth French, second Rational Arithmetic, & first English. In the two latter, he was first. The 1st English is the class in which I bore off all the premiums two years ago; and I would be proud if George would do the same, as we are the representatives of Delaware; so far, all is well with him. Should Mrs. Fisher ask either you or Aunt concerning him, tell her exactly what I have said, though *you needn't show her this letter*. Before I left home, she desired me to transmit some account of him in my letters, & I am glad that they are so favorable, & have no doubt they will be agreeable to her.

Since my return, I have felt the effects of my summer residence with you by having the ague & fever. But one dose of medicine, & a dozen pills of quinine have cured me completely. With the exception of that & having my eye hurt while playing foot-ball, (which hindered me from finishing your letter) I have been well. Give my love to Aunt, & all the family. I suppose that Miss E. Black is with you now; if so, present my compliments to her.

Your's affect[ionate]ly

Oct. 6th H. R.

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely.
Care of H. M. Ridgely
Dover
Del.]

Baltimore Christmas—Eve 1835.

My dear Nic, & my dear Ann,

Your letter of the . . . inst[ant] arrived as you are both already aware, and as there is a complete dearth of business with me in these merry times, nothing can be more advisable than that I should answer your letter. You are both conscious that idleness is the parent of vice, & that an economy of time & of the various necessaries of life is also considered, by the generality of the virtuous & civilized members of the human family, a very commendable thing. "Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined," is a maxim that I learned in the English Reader, in my younger days, & I am now "bending" myself into the useful habit of saving time, trouble, pen, ink & paper, by inditing an epistle to you both together. Besides, I have your

own worthy selves as an example. Hence, I must conclude that you prefer it in this manner, or must brand you with the character of inconsistency, if you had rather that I should write to each of you separately, I like to please folks too, especially when by pleasing them, I please myself, as in the present case.

I can hardly bring myself to believe that tomorrow will be Christmas. 'Tis true that I see a gleam of pleasure on the countenance of every one, but still it looks not like Christmas. The confectionaries & toy-shops are trimmed out in the most showy manner. How often when passing them, have I thought of Ned & the pleasure it would afford [him] to gaze in at all the "pretty things" that stand forward in bold relief, from every window, & the almost Olympic piles of your favorite cocoanut cake, Ann, remind me of you. Willy is almost too old for dolls, but I might *almost* assert, that there are enough of them to satisfy her *doll-bound* soul. (to use the expression).

All the Female portion of the city seemed to have usurped the use of the streets to themselves this afternoon, & it was to the jeopardy of your shoulders to venture out: there were a good many pretty ones, but, O! mercies! what ugly ones too. "The rose," you know, "is never without its thorn," I think the mayor should make some regulations with regard to the *ugly beauties*, & keep them at home a little more, especially two ugly sisters who meet me whenever I take my promenade, something like an evil spirit.

It is now a little after six o'clock, & just about the hour that I arrived at home, last year. I remember every little circumstance as if it had been yesterday. You were on the point of going to supper when I went over to see, & you had tripe on the table, I think. I can fancy crazy Ben Bradford testing your shaddock, & cousin — — talking of his flatulency. (Phoebus! what a subject for conversation!) I wonder if your boys will make as much noise as last year. The time before dinner, I spent very agreably with my fair cousin. "Frailty, thy name is" — — ! I received an invitation, this morning, from the governor's nephew, to spend my Christmas with him at Annapolis. I could'n't do it conveniently, however, & of course declined, though I should like to have accepted his invitation. In the next letter that you write to Miss E. Black, you must apologize to her, for my unfortunate critique on the well written part of *your* letter, which, (as you seem to insinuate in your last) was written by *her*. If there was any offense in it, at

the time that I wrote, I wot not of it. You asked me if your hand writing had not improved: to show you, that I had preceived the difference, I pointed out the different parts, & told you that I was glad to see that you could write so well. Was I to believe that Miss Elizabeth assisted you? Certainly not. And as she did not wish it to be known, it only remained with me to comply with her desire. However, I think it would be as easy for me to make a pair of silk-cotton stockings as to decypher the last sentence of your letter, about the third daughter. I must profess a real ignorance, here.

Christmas Day. Neither of you mentioned Willy's almanac in your letter. I bought one which I thought would please her, & which would be different from her own. It must have arrived in Dover last night. We have a beautiful day here. Good powers! how many turkeys will be eaten today! I eat my share, with a friend who just invited me to dine with him.

Give my love to Aunt R., & all Father's family.

A happy Christmas & a merry New Year, or rather
vice versa.

Your affectionate Brother
HENRY RIDGELY

N.B. I purchased a quantity of
paper lately, we will here-
after correspond separately
H.R.

[*To* N. & A. Ridgely]

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely
Care of H. M. Ridgely
Dover
Delaware]

Baltimore Tuesday Jan. 26th 1836

My dear Sister,

I have just been thinking upon the light which is thrown on your character by your letter, & after a long train of reasoning, I have come to the conclusion that you were either the greatest hypocrite, the greatest flatterer, or the most inconsistent being who has the honor of my acquaintance.

"I am so tired with writing, but not with *this*": that is to say not with my letter. Oh! no, that would never do, I am your dear & affectionate brother, You are candid enough to tell me that you would be glad to make a convenience of me, to degrade me into the menial office of fire-maker; 'pon honor, I think that my company would be vastly agreeable, if your fires cause so much trouble as you represent. When I return home at Easter, I will bring you a steel pen, & you can just put it up with that one which you use on "grand occasions"; you will have no excuse for not writing to me then; but as for this E. Black to whom you write such "long letters," let her be anathema; ever since you formed her acquaintance, I have been the sufferer. Your letters before came often, but now alas! they are "like angels' visits, few & far between." You would oblige me infinitely, if you would either cut her acquaintance entirely, or send on her letters to your "Dear Henry" & I promise you that they shall all be answered. But my goodness! I have half finished my letter, & I have not yet commenced it. Well here goes, in real "old style." Your's of the *blank* date, (for it is neither dated nor post-marked) arrived in good season, (I suppose). I had appointed Sunday to answer it, but a friend stopped in & kept me laughing & talking until one o'clock. For this afternoon, when I had disposed of one of the ills that flesh is *hair* to, namely a beard (excuse the pun, it is not original) I was not in the epistolary humour, & so, my dear sister, asking your pardon for the neglect, your answer was not written till Tuesday, & it is only under way now, for this is Tuesday, & Tuesday night, besides. On Sunday we had rain, hail & snow, on Monday snow in the morning, & to-day, sleighing. This is all the news that I have to tell you, except that J. Q. Adams has had the good sense to think of becoming a Van Buren man. I took father's check to the bank, received the money, & paid my board, washing & mending for myself first quarter & obtained a receipt for it. Ask father to look at the last college bill that he received, & see whether he did not pay my tuition till next April, instead of last October, as he mentions in his letter; I believe it is customary to pay the bills six months in *advance*—you will let me know in your answer.

We finished our course of Astronomy the other day, much to my regret, for although it was difficult, I must say that it was a very pleasing study. There is nothing which can give a person a higher idea of those few of his

fellow-men who have attained to celebrity in this science, & a more elevated opinion of the wisdom of Providence, than this study. There is something noble to the mind of a man, to know, that the genius of a being like himself, has ascertained the laws by which worlds removed at such an immense distance are governed, their nature, their distance, their size, & even their weight. Our Professor is a man well able to head this department, not merely practically, but scientifically. He even had me on my legs, teaching me how to calculate a horoscope, which, I, good soul, forgot as soon as I knew. When the Observatory of the College is finished, we are to learn the names & positions of the stars, for we are all as yet completely ignorant of this. But we are hurrying through the "*Sciences*" like race-horses. We have gone through our work on Astronomy, an octavo of some four hundred pages, in less than six weeks. This is a bad plan in the college. We are kept back like children till the last year, & then we pass over branches which would require two or three years to be known well. We have already studied Acoustics, Hydrostatics, Astronomy, & we have Optics, Chemistry, Mechanics & Electricity to do in the remaining five months. Can we expect to know them well? We will soon finish Conic Sections, which is all that [is] required by the college rules for the mathematical course; it rests with the students to continue in the class & study Fluxions. I intend to continue, for it will hardly do me any harm. Lectures on Natural History are to be commenced this week: they will comprise, as I have been told, Botany, Geology &c &c. This is a new thing entirely. I am beginning to look forward to the commencement, & I have been endeavouring to fix on something to be the subject of my address. I wish you would mention some subjects to me in your answer, for really it is a hard thing to determine. I must make a hurry & graduate, as I almost begin to consider myself an old man: all of my old mates are married, & I am almost afraid to look one of the gentle sex in the face. . . . Lord have mercy on the poor devil that marries Bob.

I mentioned my decision of going home at Easter before, I have so many books & other articles, that I will not be able to take them in July. I will not expect to stay more than 8 or 10 days.

Remember me to Houston. Has he received my letter of the 1st or 2nd of this month? Confound the trick I have spoilt my letter; take it as it is.

Give my love to Aunt & all the Family. I believe I have now written a letter as long as your "long one" to Miss E. Black, & politeness & humanity would require me to stop: & indeed "I fear that you'll be hoping

I'd quit it quite;
If so, I e'en must think o'stoppin
And sae, gude night.' "

Remember me to Miss E. B. in your next letter; on second thoughts, you may write to her yourself. I am tired of *this* letter, altho' I have written none before for some time, & I had rather be excused from many such jobs.

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely
Care of H. M. Ridgely Esq.
Dover
Delaware]
[*from Henry Ridgely*]

Philadelphia Thursday Jan. 19th. 1837

My Dear Sister,

I received on Monday last through the medium of Mrs. Davy, the melancholy intelligence of the death of our beloved mother. The news came upon me suddenly & unexpectedly, but the source from which she derived her information, lulled me into a belief, or rather a hope, that it might not be correct. This hope however proved delusive, for the letter of Brother C. to Dr. Gibson, which was handed to me yesterday, confirmed the worst of my fears. The delicate state of her health for the last few years, had prepared my mind in some measure for such an event. It was evident to me, when at home a few weeks since that it was rapidly declining. I saw that her constitution was weakened by long continued indisposition, & I feared that it did not possess energy enough to resist the attacks of disease. But I little thought that it would sink so soon, & that in so short a period she would be snatched from us, & it is almost impossible for me to realize the fact. Situated as I am, with nothing but the remem-

brance of what is past to bring her to view, with nothing but the streets that she has often trod in the season of her youth & gaiety to call her to my recollection, I cannot, I will not credit the mournful intelligence. But when the period of my return shall arrive, & I shall again visit that home which was rendered doubly dear to me by her presence, gloomy & desolate, no longer echoing back the voice whose tones were the sweetest music to my ear, then will the fact be presented to me in all its gloomy reality. The room in which she slept, (& where perhaps she breathed her last), the chairs from which we all rose, unbidden, at her entrance, her vacant place at table, the little flowers which she loved to nurse, though their beauty was in vain displayed in recompence for her kindness, but above all, the fond, affectionate, *motherly* embrace that was wont to greet me on my return, will indeed teach me that she is no more. It would not perhaps appear selfish in me, nor would I exaggerate her merits, were I to say that she was the kindest & best of mothers. A too great generosity of heart was her failing, if failing it might be called, & it was this as it appears that proved the cause of her death. She could not bear to see the children of a sister thrown on the mercy of a cold and heartless world, with no father to aid in their support, & no mother to minister to them that kindness which none but a mother can afford. The thought was too much for her generous & sensitive heart. She could not say or do aught that would injure even in the most trifling manner the feelings of others, & things, from which a *common* mind would have turned away unmoved, proved to her sources of torture, I might almost say. I have often of late years been asked by those who were strangers to my family if my mother was still alive, & how thankful I have always felt, when I answered "yes"! I have heard others speak of their mothers: I have listened to them as they enumerated their virtues: I have heard them tell of their kindness, of their anxiety & solicitude for their welfare & future prosperity, & repeat the advice which they had graven on their hearts. It was always a pleasure for me to hear them talk in such a manner, for there was a being knit to me by the same bonds of relationship, who possessed all the virtues which they so fondly dwelt upon, & who loved me with as pure a love. It was a melancholy satisfaction for me to learn that her death was so easy, & it seems to me that it is a blessing conferred upon our family to breathe their last in this calm & quiet manner, as if they were glad to enter upon the scenes which were opening to their

view. Such was the case with Uncle R. with our lamented sister, & such the case with our departed mother. God grant that when my period may come, I may give up my soul into his hands like her, that my mind may be haunted with the remembrance of as few misdeeds as hers was, & that my name & memory may remain behind me; the one revered as her's was, & the other with as few blots to stain its purity.

I received Nic's letter after tea, & as I was returning from the post office I left it at Mrs. Davy's. It was returned about ten o'clock with a note from Mary, in which she says "when you write remember me most affectionately to your kind Aunt, & all the family. I wrote to Ann last eve. begging her if I could render her any comfort or assistance, to call on me: do repeat and urge her to do so." Write to me as soon as you receive this & give me the particulars of her sickness & death. It will be a mournful pleasure for me to hear them.

On the same day that Mrs. Davy sent me the letter which she had received, from T. Gilpin, I rec'd. another acquainting me with the death of the Vice-President of St. Mary's. He died of the small-pox which he contracted in the Hospital, which he had visited in order to pay the last kind offices of his religion to one of its inmates. He was the most popular of all the professors, & it is the intention of the students & alumni of the institution to erect a handsome monument to his memory.

Give my love to Aunt R. & Father's family—Write soon.

Your very affectionate
Brother
H. Ridgely

Henry had graduated from St. Mary's in Baltimore and was studying medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Mr. Hilliard mentioned in the following letter had married Mary McKee, Sally Banning Ridgely's younger half-sister.

Philadelphia, Tuesday, Feb. 1st 1837

My dear Sister,

I received your letter of the 23rd ult[imo] & have for sometime been intending to reply to it, but various things have obliged me to defer doing so: Dr. Jackson however not having made his appearance in the lecture-

room this morning, I will avail myself of his absence. He is the only one of the professors who misses his lectures, & the students frequently become impatient at his neglect, & his want of punctuality in not appearing at the proper time. By the way Horner & his daughter were near being drowned yesterday afternoon. They were crossing the Delaware on the ice very imprudently, when it gave way under them, but fortunately only gave them a ducking, as I was told. His death would have been a great loss to the university as well as to the city. I suppose father has received the letter that I wrote to him last week with respect to Dr. Randolph. He is, in my opinion, the best physician that I could select, & I think it is far more advisable for a student to put himself under the care of a surgeon. Every practitioner, no matter who he may be has cases occasionally that require surgical knowledge as well as surgical skill in their treatment, & this department of medicine is one that, less than all others, can be learned from books. To be a good operator, the student must see, & use the knife for himself. In Nic's letter which reached me on Tuesday, he mentions the accident which happened to Mr. Hillyard. Who is there in Dover able to preserve his life if the injury be as serious as is represented? I forgot to mention to Father that I would like to attend the summer course of lectures. They will commence in April, soon after the present course is over. Dr. Chapman, Horner & Hodge will lecture on the branches which they have during the winter-course. Jackson will take Materia Medica instead of the Institutes & Dr. John Bell will take the latter branch. Mitchell lectures on Chemistry instead of Hare. Harris on surgery instead of Gibson, & these compose the faculty. The fee for the whole course is seventy dollars. Will you mention it to Father?

Tell Nic that he may depend on my keeping his secret. I will bundle up his articles very carefully. If you will look on the paper that covers the soap, you will see that it is intended for "the shaving box as well as the *nursery*." Don't tell him of it, for I am afraid that he will think I bought it merely to tease him. I did not remark it until after it was purchased, but I could not help laughing when I did take notice of it.

I was looking over a medical library which was advertised for sale, last Saturday, & found to my surprise that the greater part of it consisted of the books formerly belonging to grandfather & Uncle Abraham. They were sent here for sale by Dr. J. S. Naudain, I believe, as I saw his name

in many of the works. Many of them were old and standard works.

I wish you would ask Father to write soon & let me have his views with regard to the gentleman under whom he wishes me to study. I should like to hear from him soon, as in case I could not get in Dr. Randolph's office, I would have to make other arrangements. Tell him also to send me on the money at the same time; the six dollars & fifty-five cents which I paid for his pistols & a copy of Ewell, besides the eight dollars which you may recollect my paying Mrs. Davy for my board when in Philadelphia last fall with Mother & yourself. I have her bill now by me: I forgot to show it to him when at home at Christmas.

Give my love to Aunt R. & Father's family.

Your affectionate
Brother
H.R.

[*Addressed to* Miss Ann Ridgely
Care of H. M. Ridgely Esq.
Dover,
Del.]

The following, from Henry, dated July 18th, 1837, describes a memorable event in the annals of the American Navy. It was the launching of the United States ship *Pennsylvania.* At that time, and until 1851, she was the largest battleship of the American Navy. She was launched at the Philadelphia Navy Yard after fifteen years of work in construction. She carried a complement of 1,100 men, approximately one-third more than any other American battleship of her time.

Philadelphia Tuesday July 18th. 1837

Dear Ann,

Well, Nancy, the "big ship" is at last off, & after a few days, people will have something new to talk about, for she has engrossed the conversation of every one in our goodly city during the last month. She slid into her destined element this afternoon at twenty-five minutes past two, though I cannot say "she walked the waters like a thing of life", unless we take Daniel Lambert, Mrs. Many, or some other person as fat as they to represent our race. But heaven forfend this, I say, in times when the ther-

mometer ranges between seventy & a hundred. She seemed to hesitate starting at first, but she soon changed her mind & slid off coolly & gradually, shaking off in clouds the dust which has been so long resting on her, & dipping the head of old Hercules in the water, so that when she regained her position he looked as clean & as nice as a "new-made bridegroom". The vessels & steamboats were ranged in two lines from the navy-yard, & as she made her first plunge, & then took her course directly between them, every mouth (except my own) in the immense multitude sent forth its shout of welcome. The various bands then commenced their music, the steamboats began to ring their bells, & the cannons from the navy-yard tried if they couldn't make more noise than all of them together, for some dozen rounds. Two revenue cutters (one of them from N. Castle) then followed them up alternately for two minutes, so that you may imagine we had noise enough at least. Take it all in all however, it was a grand, a noble sight. For two hours before the launch, Front & Second streets were filled with one dense mass of people resembling an endless funeral procession more than any thing I could compare them to. The Jersey & Philadelphia shores as far as the eye could reach were black with the crowd: every house, every stand, & even the masts & rigging of the vessels were covered. The steamboats & vessels were decked off with flags, with here and there a band of music to enliven the scene, & the boats belonging to the various clubs of the city were skimming backwards & forwards over the Delaware each bearing its appropriate standard, & rowed by the club clothed in its own peculiar dress. As is usual on all such occasions, *your* modest, bashful & retiring (?) sex, composed one half of the assembly. When the lion of the day had selected a resting place in her watery home, the steamboats passed one after the other alongside of her, & each gave her three cheers, which were responded to by the crew on board. For variety's sake, some of the boys & men on board, as if to rival the feats of Sam Patch, then commenced leaping from the figure-head into the Delaware, a height of some three or more stories, much to the admiration of the spectators. Although every boat large or small was held under contribution, still not one of them was upset to my knowledge; several of them were so small as to hold but two men. The swell in fact was not worth minding, & did not cause the Ohio (on board of which I beheld the sights) to raise one inch; still she was very near the scene of action. I don't know that I ever saw the city so

crowded with persons, staring at the signs, & gazing in at every window, a la Huffington. Of course, they were country-folks, for *we city gentry* never think of such a thing: but, *poor rustic boors*, they are excusable, "they know not what they do".

I think it probable I may be with you before the middle of next week, & I may perhaps bring one of my friends from Virginia to spend the time with me. I haven't asked him yet, & of course I can't say whether he will accept my invitation or not. I promised when at home to bring Margaret a present of some description or other, but I am at a loss what it shall be. I have never given her anything but a little money now & then, & if you will mention something or other that she may like, I will purchase it. Don't mention it to her on any account for I may forget it. Write to me *before next Monday* & let me know.

I wrote to Aunt R. on Sunday: give my love to her. I was mistaken in saying there were no accidents during the launch. I was told whilst at tea by one of our gentlemen who was on the Jersey Side, that he saw forty persons dropped from a steamboat into the water, in consequence of a part of the boat falling from under them. One leg was broken, but no lives lost.

I intend taking a trip to Burlington soon, where I shall see Mrs. Lowber. She is yet uncertain whether she will visit you or not. Give my Love to all.

Your affectionate
Brother
H. R.

Margaret was a devoted nurse.

The care of the Dover household had fallen on Ann's shoulders when she was but a girl. The death of her elder sister Elizabeth, the birth of Edward in 1831, and her mother's failing health caused her to assume responsibilities usually not borne by young women until after marriage. Added to these duties was the care and companionship of her father, who, when his wife died, turned more and more to Ann. She was mistress of his house and many persons coming to the little capital were her guests.

Charles Irene du Pont was a member of the Delaware Assembly in 1841. He was the widower of Dorcas Van Dyke of New Castle and the father of a daughter, Mary, and two sons, Victor and Charles du Pont,

Jr. While in Dover he met Ann Ridgely and asked her to marry him.

During this winter a speaker came to Dover, Lucretia Mott, who arrived from the north via Smyrna with a small party of Quakers. She had spoken there on Abolition. The hearers were infuriated and the men of her party were tarred and feathered. This news reached Dover Green before the lady herself arrived; Senator Ridgely heard of the outrage and decided that Dover should not be disgraced by similar behavior. When the Abolitionists reached Dover, he met them and with his sons escorted them to his house on the Green. Ann Ridgely was the hostess. Lucretia Mott was to speak from the steps of the Court House directly opposite the Ridgely house. When it was time for the speech, Mr. Ridgely and several other gentlemen escorted the party to the Court House steps. It is said they carried guns. When the meeting was over they retraced their steps making their way through a mob collected on the Green. They entered the house with its low doorstep and went into the parlor, where a window gave onto the street without.

As the crowd had gathered around the window and there were murmurs from outside, one of the guests suggested that the shutters should be closed. Henry Ridgely forbade this. He said that no one was afraid. A fire burned brightly on the hearth in the little parlor and Lucretia Mott was asked to sit near it while the family, Ann and two of her suitors included, gathered near to listen to the fascinating talker's anecdotes. Miss Mott was an animated speaker. At one point in her tale she arose from her chair to make an emphatic gesture and stepped forward, without realizing she had done so. Then, intending to resume her chair, to her surprise and to the dismay of her hearers she sat instead upon the floor.

Charles du Pont ran and tenderly picked her up. Another young man in the party burst into a rude laugh and hid his face in his handkerchief. Both of these men had asked Ann's hand in marriage, but up to this moment she had been unable to make up her mind. After the episode she knew that Charles du Pont was her choice, and soon thereafter they became engaged. A letter came to Ann from Mr. du Pont's sister-in-law, Sophie, the wife of his brother Samuel F. du Pont. The letter that follows is her answer to the welcome conveyed to her in it.

Friday evening, Feb. 26, 1841

My dear Mrs. du Pont

It is with feelings of the utmost gratitude that I hasten to thank you for the kindness which breathes in every word of your letter. Your sweet and gentle way of welcoming me to your family has already gained you my love and though I know it is a trifling boon, yet I feel it will give you pleasure to receive it, and if closer ties should unite us that I may anticipate the welcome of affection from you. I wish to be loved not entirely for another's sake but beg some portion of your heart for myself alone. Our acquaintance has not been brief for through the medium of partial friends our recollection of each other began years ago. To be with dear Mrs. Couper and not learn to love Mrs. du Pont would be impossible, tho' I dare not hope that "Annie Ridgely" could ever receive such meed of praise, yet I feel that her kind friends have ever given her more than her due. I met you not as a stranger, I parted from you with the ardent wish of again meeting, and I now look for your affection as one of the pleasures of my life.

Conscious of having wisely chosen I shall desert my present cheerful fireside with the anticipation of much happiness, and though leaving my dear family will occasion poignant sorrow, yet the new tie will open to me such sources of happiness that my friends will not regret losing me, but only joy at my bright prospects. In the responsible situation I have chosen, I feel that affection will teach me my duty, and hope that I may be so guided as to merit the trust reposed in me. May I deserve the kindness you have already shown me, and from your whole family gain the love I so ardently covet.

Sincerely yours ANNIE RIDGELY

Charles du Pont and Ann Ridgely were married in May, 1841. Not long after, they went to live at "Louviers," their home on the Brandywine near Wilmington. Ann's brother Nicholas wrote her at length of happenings at home and his own plans for the future. He was then just past twenty.

Dover Tuesday May 25:1841

As Henry & Willy intend starting to "Louviers" tomorrow I have taken my pen to comply with my promise to write to you by them. I have much

that I would like to say, but so many things seem pressing upon me, which claim my attention, I am fearful that I shall not be able to write a full sheet to you—however, my sister, I will send what I can, and that is all that will be required. I received your note by Mr. Huffington last evening, and we were all very glad to hear from you. We thought your complaints of our negligence in some measure without foundation, as we had sent you two letters & had received but one in return—however I believe you had not received my last letter when your note was written.

If you will still permit me to find fault with you, let me ask you if you do not think you have served Aunt Hillyard rather coldly. Of the two letters you have sent to us, her name is not so much as mentioned in either. She feels it too very sensibly. On Saturday night, I sat up with Mr. Hillyard's corpse & spent the early part of the evening with Aunt Mary, she then spoke of your negligence. Let me urge you, my sister, if you have not done so before you receive this, to write her *at once* a long letter. She is very desolate & feels any neglect now with double keenness. I shall stay with her, perhaps every night this week as she will be too lonely without some one. Aunt Banning has been with her, for two or three days, & has been a very great comfort to her. Perhaps if you prevail upon her to spend a few days with you this summer, she would derive much advantage from the recreation.

I observed in the paper a few days since the death of Mr. Patton's second wife. I suppose you saw it. He seems to be most unfortunate.

We miss you, very much, my dear sister. Indeed we cannot yet realize that you are really gone, to return to our house no more. I seem to be looking forward to the time when you will return to us. Our house has now become what I have ever been led to regard as the most desolate of homes—a family without a female. There seems to [be] no connecting link to bind us together, as there has always been, and though we get along as happily as possible, yet there is evidently something still wanting. And when I look into the future and am able to realize that this will always be the state of things with us, I must confess that I feel more indifferent about staying at home than formerly.

Indeed the ties which bind me to home are less strong than they used to be, and now that you are gone, & Willy is going from us, I seem to feel anxious myself to enter upon the stage of life independent of all, & endeav-

our to do something upon which I may look with pleasure and expect the blessing of that God whom it is, my chief desire to serve while upon earth.

By the way, I may also add that after much deliberation & reflection upon the subject I have determined to join the ministry of the Methodist Church. I am fearful that the step I have taken will not be approved by all of my friends, but I rest satisfied with having acted *conscientiously*, as I look not for my reward in this life. As I wish not, and hope not for any applause of men, it was my chief desire to act with a reference to Eternity, laying aside all worldly considerations. This I trust I have done; and now that I have decided I shall soon commence my labours.

Our town seems to be improving quite rapidly. Mr. Reed is making considerable additions and improvements to his property. That old brick stable attached to the tavern, & which stood so prominent, he is either having down or altering. However, I have not heard what his plans are, and when they are fully developed I shall be able to give a more graphic description—until which time you must rest content with the assurance of its improvement to the appearance of the town.

I have already become completely domiciled in what was lately your room, and am ready now to dispute the entrance of any one within its limits. I find it rather more comfortable that the other.

Our garden looks beautifully, but I can scarcely walk into it without feeling that its sweetness and beauty are in a great measure wasted. How long it will continue to look so prettily I cannot say because, say what you will, men have little soul or taste in such matters, & where there is no *female*, there is not often a pretty garden. However it will be fresh in all probability as long as I remain at home myself, which will not be a year longer I think. We were all glad to hear of the happiness which you enjoyed, but we were not much surprised, because we have often & long heard of the kindness & affection, as well as the taste & intelligence of the family into which you have entered & we flatter ourselves that with all her faults our sister has traits in her character which will ever win her friends: however you say you are already nearly spoiled & I do not wish to complete the work, so you need not expect me to pay you many compliments, even when I feel them.

You ask me when you shall see me at your home. Indeed I scarcely know what to say. I had thought of going the last of next month if not before;

but Father talks of visiting you some time during that month, and I suppose I shall have to postpone my jaunt, from which I anticipate great pleasure, for some time yet. However I can assure you that it is no want of inclination that keeps me from seeing you, & as soon as I can conveniently go, you may look to see me. We shall miss Willy very much, for tho' she stays with Aunt R. still we see her very often. We could not consent to her leaving us were we not assured that it would be so greatly to her advantage. I hope you will keep her for quite a long time, and make her write home often, as this would prove a very useful exercise. We have endeavoured to get her wardrobe fitted up in some kind of style & hope you will not find it very deficient.

And now, my dear Sister, that I have hurried thro' what might be most interesting to you, when shall we see you in Dover? We hope you and Mr. duP. will not forget your numerous promises to visit us often and soon. I am indeed very anxious to be with you upon the Brandywine I anticipate much pleasure from again visiting the Sunday School at which I was so agreeably entertained last summer. Since my experience in teaching last winter, I have imbibed a very strong love for children & scarcely see one without feeling immediately interested.

Remember me affectionately to Dr. Couper's family when you write. I shall seldom hear from them now you are gone. I shall be sorry on this account as you know how much attached I am to them all.

We all join heartily in love to you & Mr. duP. & hope before a great while to see both in Dover. I hope my dear sister, that you will not let the kind friends who now surround you make you forget or neglect those you have left behind. I beg you to write to me very soon, as I shall be the amanuensis of the family, I suppose, while I remain with them.

Your aff[ectionate] Brother NICHOLAS

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Charles I. du Pont
Near Wilmington
Delaware]

The following letter tells us Williamina was at school in Wilmington the following autumn. Ann went to Dover to visit her father when her sister went to "Louviers" for a week-end. The "Mammy" whom Willie

requested to "not forget my cake" was Mammy Margaret, the beloved nurse and friend of all the Ridgely children. It was Mammy Margaret who waked Henry and Ned before daylight, gave them hot pancakes and, putting on their warm coats and mufflers, took them by a reluctant hand to the edge of the Green where before "sun-up" the stage stopped that was to carry them to school for another long separation from home. To the end of her days "Mammy" had their devoted love and they her untiring service.

The two apparently unconnected letters below are written on the same sheet, the first from Willie and the latter note from Mr. du Pont. The date-line should have read 1841, for in October 1840 Ann Ridgely and Charles du Pont had not yet met.

October the 10th 1840 [41]

Dear Sister

I came out on Saturday, and of course was delighted to do so. We are all very well of course. I received your note and will try to do all you requested me. I think the artificials you bought for my bonnet are beautiful. I believe I will not have it fixed till you come home. I like the stuff for my bag also. I suppose you and Aunty got home safe, how did Aunty bear the journey? How is father? They were all delighted to see you I know. I like school very much. There is only one cross teacher, and she is too cross for comfort. How is Miss Maria? I told Henry he had better not have put George in that house, for every person that went to it lately died, I think there must be a death mark in it. How is Mammy? Tell her she must not forget my cake. Did Aunty find my clothes, that I left home? Will you please bring them up. Mary and I went to Sunday School this morning. Tell Nicholas he must answer my letter very soon. Mr. du Pont is going to Philadelphia to morrow, and Mary is going to stay with her aunt Sophia. Give my love to Father, Aunty, and all of the rest. Mary and the boys send their love. I must now conclude for Mr. du Pont is going to add a P.S. Your affectionate sister

WILLIE M. RIDGELY

My dearest Ann— Willie has left me abundant room for a postscript. I have but little to say except that I miss you greatly. Home is not home

without you, if I was a selfish man I would feign illness & have you back in a hurry. I hope however that you, (surrounded by your father, & Brothers) do not partake of the feelings of loneliness I have, the few months absence cannot already have effaced or destroyed those feelings of local attachment you had for Dover. I hope you bore the journey without over fatigue, that you will keep your promise & not over work yourself, you are too precious to me to have your health exposed or endangered. I am not without uneasiness, it was imprudent for you to go down so early avoid the night air, let me hear from you soon.

I received a letter to day from Philad[elphi]a informing me of the death of Genl. Irvine, an estimable man & for many years a friend of our families, I leave here to attend the funeral some time tomorrow & may be delayed over night, I will send Mary with her Aunt Sophia. Julia is delighted with their new residence the house has a cheerful & pleasant appearance and I trust it will be both agreeable & beneficial to Julia, I am almost tempted to visit Boston & Lowell during your absence but will find it difficult to arrange my business to allow me 4 or 5 days absence.

Yours as ever

CHARLES

My best respects to your Father & remembrance to your Brothers.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. du Pont
care of H. M. Ridgely Esq.
Dover, Del.]

In 1846 Ann du Pont was again visiting her old home in Dover. Her stepdaughter, Mary du Pont, writes to her of doings on the Brandywine and of little Amie's pranks. Ann had not taken her daughter, now four years old, to Dover, doubtless because her father was very ill. Anxiety about his health was the occasion of his daughter's visit. "Mr. H.," "Lizzie B.," or "Dr. M." mentioned so vaguely cannot be identified. Alfred, Pauline, and Victorine du Pont were Mary du Pont's cousins. The "Aunt" was Mary Ridgely, the Chancellor's widow, and the Mrs. Ridgely to whom greetings were sent was Henry M. Ridgely's second wife, Sally Ann Comegys. She was a daughter of Cornelius Parsons Comegys, Governor of Delaware, 1837-1841, and his wife, Ruhamah,

daughter of John Marim of Chipping-Norton, near Little Creek, Kent County on Delaware. Henry M. Ridgely's children were grown when Sally Ann came to preside over the old house; only the youngest ones knew her well. Although she had no children of her own, she was a universal favorite and many Dover children delighted to call her Auntie Ridgely or Miss Sally Ann. Her brother, who lived across the Green, was Chief Justice Joseph Comegys and on him she leaned for advice during her long widowhood.

Louviers, April 8th 1846

I write to you now dear mother, fearing you might feel uneasy at not hearing from home, for I have not a single piece of news to tell you. Every [thing] gets along here as *usual*, dull enough I must confess—but even that is not at all extraordinary. I was very much disappointed to see Papa home without you; for it is very lonely here now:— but I think it is much better for you to remain until your Father has quite recovered, that you may be able to leave him without uneasiness. I was very glad indeed to hear he continues better. Amie often asks when you will come home but seems very well contented with me. Her chief amusement for these last few fine days has been playing in the heap of sand near the cellar door:—so that I have a great deal of trouble to keep her at all *fit to be seen* as you may suppose. She has been out visiting with me very often & behaves herself very well when out. I took her to church with me Sunday and she stayed very quietly all the time. But when the organ began, she said in a whisper "Sissy I guess that is the *Polka*", and commenced dancing. No body saw her fortunately. Then when the Bishop preached she mimicked all his gesticulations first with one hand & then with the other. You may be sure I was much amused. All about the house is getting on well except Lucian—& really he has been behaving *outrageously* ever since you left. If you can't make him do better when you return, you might as well send him home, for he is quite *beyond* either mine or Papa's control; minds neither of us, & does nothing but *run wild*. I am really tired scolding him and Papa storms at him, but he don't seem to mind at all; and has tried my temper more than anything lately. You had better not make any engagement with his mother about keeping him until you see wether he will do better. Papa says to tell you not to get

any Shad, you can get plenty here now as cheap, without the trouble of carrying them up. Papa is now asleep on the sofa. He has been very tired since he came home, but is I believe well. We had quite a time here last night—first with the drum taking fire, and then about eleven o'clock there was an explosion of one of the rolling mills. There was no glass broken, but the schock was very great, & the house rocked dreadfully. I was about going to bed & threw the covers over Amie's head, who was asleep there for fear of the glass cutting her, & was surprised there was nothing broke. There is nothing new here. Paulina went to Alexandria Monday. I was so glad I had not made up my mind to go for I would not have liked to have left home when you were away. Paulina has been getting the greatest lot of new things. She got a petite drawn silk bonnet *loaded* with flowers & costing *10 dollars*. I want to go to Philad[elphia] when you come home for a day to get a summer bonnet. Every one had them on last Sunday at Church & Amie & I felt quite strange. Poor Amie wants a spring bonnet very badly, but I did not like to get her one in your absence. What did you send back your mantilla for; your cloak must be so heavy. However, I suppose you have not been out much. I marked a pin-cushion for Miss Annie Gardner, and wrote her a congratulatory note; & a note also to Miss Fowler. I wanted you here very much to help me. I want to write a few lines to Will so must turn to the top again.

Dearest Willie, Many thanks for your last letter though it made me feel very bad. I had been always used to have a good laugh over your letters—that I felt more the sadness of this one. But you ought not to have been afraid of boring me by telling me your feelings, for you know I have sympathized very much with you; in the anxious time you have had lately. I cannot tell you how distressed I was at the idea of your not coming up here this summer. You must not say that dearest, for when your father gets quite well again, I am sure you can come for a short time. Do come if only for a *week*—I want so much to see you; and shan't be able to get down myself. I would not like to go to Dover so soon after that affair with Mr. H [?] I don't think it would *look well*. Beside I expect Eliza Mayes here, early in June, and of course I could not leave home. Oh Will I am so very very anxious to see you. I have a hundred thousand *very important* things to tell you. Your father I trust will soon be well & you come just for a *little while* —without being uneasy about him. I should not think there was any dan-

ger of his having another attack. I had set my *heart* on having you here all summer:—but people are nearly always disappointed in this world, I believe, in their calculations. However I won't say any thing more about this —only don't say you can't come for a few days, some time in the summer. Perhaps change of air would be good for your father; and he might come up himself some time this summer, and then you could come with him. Well, we must hope for the best. I was quite surprised to hear of Maria Comegys engagement. How suddenly the matter was arranged. I was very glad indeed to hear of it. Is there any likelihood dear Will of your soon following her example? For my part I am quite resigned to my fate—of being an old maid—and don't believe I shall ever meet "Mr. Right" as the folks say. Did mother tell you how the Brandywine folkes went on about me this winter? and said she was acting so *injudiciously*—it was *even more ridiculous* than about Paulina & Gene's flirtation. Do ask her to tell you about it—& also the fuss that was made about Victorine & the Dr. & the lecture he received on "Brandywine propriety". I wish I could tell you myself about some of the scenes here this winter. Oh my dear I had my fortune told in a very celebrated French book Cousin Alfred just got, written by the same lady that told so truly Josephine's fortune. Pauline, Victorine & I wrote our's all down—to see if they would come true. Some things were very good. I can't tell you all mine but will tell some things. Mine was the best of them all. It told me I was destined to be loved but never to love any one myself—that I never had (which is true enough) & never would love. That I ought not to get married for I knew it would not *suit me*. That I ought not if I ever wished to be married to have rejected the love of one of my old lovers, for it was sincere, & that I would never have so good an opportunity again. I don't know that I ever *had a good one*. Victorine says it meant the person Papa caused such a fuss about this fall, & who sent me that novel. I am afraid even to put initials on the turnings of letters, but you know that *that affair* was *never serious*. Well it ended however by promising me a husband who would adore me & with whom I would be very happy & whose character was perfection itself. I don't put much faith in the last part of the prediction anyhow. I will tell you about Victorine's and Paulina's another time. I wish I could have had yours told. My dear I think there will be no want of flowers in Dover next summer. I feel myself *quite slighted* at receiving no seeds as long as they were distributed so plentifully.

Oh my dear when Lizzy B. gets home do ask her about Dr. M. and what she thinks of him. He don't admire her—don't think her even pretty—says her sister is the prettiest of the two, so I think she has not much chance. But don't let on you have heard anything about it, but ask her what she thinks of him. She got the landlady to *introduce* her in the *entry* where she managed to meet him so he went to see them two or three times I believe afterwards, but did not appear at all captivated. Well, Will I hope I have written you enough nonsense to amuse you a little—as I intended. Goodbye dearest do write soon and believe me your most affec[tionate], MARY——

Aunt Sophia has got very much better since she went to Philad[elphia]. Aunt Julia has had letters from Uncle Irvin—the Saratoga had reached Rio but it was to go on to Montevideo, at once, so that it will have left before poor Frank can have got there which is unfortunate.

My dear Mother I have missed you very much. It seems a long time since I have seen you. I did not think when I sayed goodbye it would be for so long a time. I hope you will write soon and let me know how your father is and yourself also. Give my best love to Mrs. Ridgely & also to your Aunt. I have begun a set of shirts today for Charlie he is in great want of them. It is very *amusing* to be sewing all by myself, here, such a disagreeable rainy day. You know I always have the *blues* rainy weather so must excuse this dull letter—and believe me dear mother with much love, y[ou]rs affec[tionately]

MARY

Aimee wanted to write you a letter—so I held her hand. Don't hurry home on Aimee's account as I am taking good care of her.

Dear Mother I send you my love & many kisses. I want to see you again very much, but I am going to be very good till you get home. Sissy brought me a beautiful Noah Ark. I have only lost about half the things in it. I send my love & plenty of kisses to dear grandfather & hope he will soon get well. Kiss Aunt Willie & Grandm[other] a kiss too, for me. Y[ou]r Aimee.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. C. I. du Pont
Care of H. M. Ridgely Esq.
Dover, Delaware.]

At this time Nicholas Ridgely, who had married Mary Tilden in 1845, was writing a family outline for his sister, Ann Ridgely du Pont, and he had asked his Aunt Mary (Ridgely) Morris to tell him all she could of the ancestors of his grandmother, Ann (Moore) Ridgely.

Mary (Ridgely) Morris had been her mother's constant companion, even after her marriage, and knew the story of Moore Hall and of her grandfather, Judge William Moore, and his Scottish wife, Williamina Wemyss of Fifeshire. Their residence, Moore Hall, was near Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. Valley Forge was but a few miles away.

Mary's reply to her nephew's request is in the following letter:

Dover July 30th 1847

I never my dear Nicholas regretted any act I myself did (not considered sinful) more than returning from Pennsylvania without my long anxious wish being gratified of seeing Moore Hall. It still makes me uncomfortable when I think of it—nor do I think I shall feel satisfied until I do; do not be surprised, either you or Mary, if you some day during the fine weather of Autumn see me at your door. We stop'd at Paoli, and not meeting you there I enquired if I could get a conveyance for myself daughters and baggage over to Phoenixville at once, and on what terms. I found I could and for what I considered a very reasonable price; and fully intended to go, Emily was delighted to go, but Anna Maria opposed to it very much, so I relinquished my long hoped for visit and took my seat in the car again. She thought there were so many of us and so much baggage it would be quite an imposition on your family. I would have gone up after reaching Philadelphia had not the weather been so distressingly warm and dusty, in coming down from York, it was really almost sufocating.

I left the girls in the city. Two days after my return home their father went up and for the last two weeks they have been traveling through the state of New York and part of Connecticut, I think it most probable they will be at home tomorrow. I am sorry to tell you how exceedingly unwell your Father is—he has a most distressing diarrhia, is as weak as an infant and takes no nourishment scarcely of any kind. Yesterday and today I have sent him over some rennit *Slip*, or curd, which he is usually fond of, but he takes very little of it, Willy has been up since Sunday. Sally Ann has been

sick too. She is about again, your Father seems to think he cannot remain here many day's longer.

And Now my dear Nicholas, I will, as well as I can, fulfill the promise I made you by communicating all I know or remember to have heard of my ancestors on the Maternal side; of my Father the old family Bible has already told you. You must permit me to go as far back as *my great, great*, Grand Father, Sir John Moore, whose family Seat was Fawley in Birkshire. He was knighted by Charles The First of England, on The 21st of May 1627, and lost both his estate and life in the revolution which ended in the execution of that unfortunate king. The motto of his coat of Arms was "Nihil utile quod non honestum". I am truely sorry I cannot tell in what year John Moore, my great Grand Father came to America; he left in England two sons. One of them was the Rev. Thomas Moore Chaplain to the celebrated scholar and Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Atterbury, whose sermons he published. He died Rector of Little Britain in London, leaving a highly respectable family, one of whom was Thomas Moore D.D. . Rector of North Bury in Kent. The other son left in England by my g[rea]t g[ran]d Father was Daniel Moore who Possessed a large estate, and was for many years a member of Parliament his eldest daughter married Thomas Erskine, late Chancellor of England and was the mother of David Montague Erskine, now Lord Erskine. Another of his son's and one who came with him to this country, was William Moore, of Moore Hall (my grandFather) who left a highly respectable family. Another was John Moore, an eminent Merchant of New York, an Alderman of that city, for many years a member of the Legislature, at the time of his death Colonel of one of the New York Regiments and a member of the Kings Council for the Province. He was the *first* person buried in Trinity Church Yard. My great grand Father had two daughters who married in this country one of them a gentleman of the name of Evans, her picture I have often seen, and she was very beautiful. I do not know of any children she left but two daughters; one of them married a Mr. Franks, the other a Mr. Rusmier. To tell you of all the descendants of this large family would fill a pretty sizable Volume. Of my G[ran]d-Mother I will now speak, who' was esteemed by those bless'd with her acquaintance as the best of human beings, gentle as woman should be, and heir to every christian virtue; one who' could say in the hour of affliction "the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away and blessed be his holy

name" She was born in Scotland, her Father was a son of the Earl of Wemyss, an officer in the Army, and kill'd in battle a short time before her birth—her Mothers maiden name was *Lock*—who' died immediately after the child was born, and directing that it should be call'd William, which was done with the addition of *ina*—the origin of the name Williamina; while a child she came to this country with her Uncle. At 16 she was married to my grand Father then 24. They lived together 67 years and were the Parents of many children. My g[ran]d Father was 91 years old at his death—his wife eight years younger, only survived him eight months. They are both buried in Radnor Church Yard near Phila[delph]ia. Neither of them had ever lost a *tooth*, I mention this as something so uncommon.

My great grand Father John Moore, was a most respectable man and at the time, Christ Church was built, in Phila[delph]ia subscribed largely to its erection, the pew *he* occupied is still held by his descendants, altho there has been an alteration in the church it is the same place, when a child at school in the city and all my life when there, if I attend Christ Church I have that pew to go to. Were I my dear Nicholas to write all the little incidents I can remember to have heard from my Mother and Aunt of the family, you would find employment for a long time in reading them, particularly when done with so very bad a pen, I can scarcely write any *now* with it. I hope your wife and the dear little Boy are quite well, my best love to her. I have sent over to hear how your Father is at this time and will tell you. Your Father is no better. They desire their love to you

believe me dear Nicholas
Your affectionate
Aunt
M. R. Morris

Were I not so very tired of the pen I would write this over—tis shameful and full of mistakes.

August 3d I regret to say your Father is no better than when the within was written. Your sister Ann came down yesterday.

[*Addressed to* Rev [eren]d Nicholas Ridgely
Phoenixville
Chester County
Pennsylvania]

Two discrepancies have been noted in Mary's history of the family: William Moore was actually born in America, and John Moore, the first of *his line* buried in Trinity Church.

Henry Moore Ridgely died at his home on the Green in Dover on his birthday, August 6th, 1847. He was buried in Christ Churchyard near the graves of his ancestors.

Five years after the death of his first wife, Sally Banning, he had married Sally Ann, a daughter of Governor Cornelius Comegys. His second wife survived him forty years, dying in the old house in 1887.

The following letter is to Mrs. Charles I. du Pont from her youngest brother, Edward Ridgely. The St. Mary's College from which he had just been graduated was in Wilmington. Henry, Edward's brother, had married Virginia Jenkins in 1843.

Dover, July 2nd, 1851

Dear Sister,

If Mr. duPont was not in Dover I would delay writing to you for a few days until I could have written something which might have interested you, but since he is in Dover I cannot suffer him to return without sending you a short note. We arrived safely home Saturday evening after a very slow and tiresome passage, not reaching Dover until nearly five o'clock. They have all been very kind to me, and I must say that I feel very much at home in my old room where I am now writing upon Father's old office table. Notwithstanding my eagerness to leave St. Marys I could scarcely refrain from crying when I was bidding farewell to Mr. Reilly and the teachers. The remembrance of the many pleasant hours I had passed there while studying, the benefit I had derived from my three years course, the regular habits of study I had there contracted, the association of my classmates and teachers, together with the pleasure I derived from being with you on Saturdays and Sundays, all filled me with a melancholy which I never before experienced in leaving any place. I really felt as if I was taking a final adieu of tried friends and going among perfect strangers. I was truly sorry to hear from Mr. du Pont that you were still confined to your bed. I was afraid that your kindness for me in coming to our commencement would be too fatiguing for you. I sincerely hope however that before this

reaches you, you may have entirely recovered. I have not yet commenced the study of the law and will not till the weather moderates, as it would be of no advantage to begin studying while it is so oppressively hot. Aunt Ridgely's health continues very much as usual. She sends her love to you. Henry and Virginia are both well, but their little girl is not very well. Virginia seems very anxious concerning her as this summer will be a trying time for her. I would like very much to see you in Dover once more, but as the weather is so warm and the Scarlet fever in town I would advise you to delay your visit for some time. When I commenced this letter, Sister, I thought Mr. duPont would not leave Dover until to morrow morning, but I have just heard that he intends leaving this afternoon, and as it is now two o'clock I must draw this hasty note to a close. Give my love to Mary and a Kiss to Amie and both Harry's. Write as soon as you feel able and if there is any thing I can do for you or Mr. duPont down here do not fail to mention it. Your kindness to me during the three years I was at St. Marys was truly that of a mother for a son, and nothing could give me more pleasure than doing anything for you which lies in my power. Give my respects to Miss Mary and my love to Charlie, and tell the latter I should be very glad to see him in Dover. I shall not fail to write to you often and hope you will answer my letters punctually.

Your affectionate brother
NED.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. C. I. duPont,
"Louviers" Delaware]

Dover, August 20th 1851

Thank you, my dear Sister, for your last kind letter, which I should have answered long ere this had I not supposed you were absent from home. Such letters as the last you kindly wrote me, so long and dictated by such kind feelings, assure me that it is a pleasure for you to write to me, and that you are only prevented from writing more frequently by the household duties, which necessarily demand your attention.

I suppose by this time you have returned from New York, and I have no doubt but that you have had a very pleasant visit. It is so seldom that you leave home, that when you do go your time must always pass very agreeably. In your last letter you promised when you returned to give me an account of your jaunt. Do not forget it.

Willie is now in Dover, where she has been since Sunday week. She has her little boy with her, and both she and her babe look remarkably well. Indeed, everyone appears astonished at Willie's appearance and says she looks even younger than when she was married. Her youngest boy is one of the nicest little fellows that I ever saw. He is so good and so full of life that I really think I love him, something unusual for me to feel towards children as young as he is.

Mary Ridgely [widow of Rev. Nicholas Ridgely] returns to New Castle to day. On her way down she remained a day or two in Dover, intending as she returned to stay some time here but while in Maryland little Harry was taken quite sick, indeed at one time his life was almost dispaired of. This made her visit in Maryland much longer than she intended, and consequently had not time to spend more than one night in Dover. She herself is not at all well, being scarcely able to endure the ride to the steamboat landing.

I gave her the power of attorney Mr. duPont sent me, properly signed in the presence of two witnesses. Sister, I wish to know your opinion in regard to my spending six months or a year at a law school. As for myself, my mind is nearly made up to go. I have consulted with a great many and have always been advised to go. My choice is Yale College, the expenses there are less and the advantages more than at Princeton or Cambridge. In the latter the instruction is usually given by means of lectures, while at New Haven there are regular recitations with occasional lectures. The Moot Courts are held more frequently at the latter place, and the number of students being less than at Harvard (I do not know the number at Princeton) we will be compelled to argue oftener. In regard to the expense; I find that it will cost me about four hundred dollars a year (giving the highest price for board, washing &c). It may be less; indeed Luther Reynolds, who was at Yale a year, told me that his expenses for the year did not exceed three hundred dollars. As to the advantages, you are well aware that the practice of arguing in a Moot Court will give a young practitioner great advantage when he comes before a Jury. While constant recitations to regular professors will incite the young student to closer application than in a lawyer's office with no one to contend with.

I think of trying it for six months at any rate, and should it be worth the extra expense I will in all probability spend a year there. If I should de-

termine to go I will leave Dover in about a month from this, as the session commences the first of October.

I have gone into detail as I wish you to advise me with the frankness and kindness which have always characterised your advice to me on any subject connected with my self.

I was truly glad to hear by your letter that Mr. duPont had at last completely arranged matters in regard to Fox Hall farm. His mind is now entirely rid of that anxiety in relation to that farm which has been a constant source of vexation since its purchase. Ma is quite well, and desires me to give you her love. Harriet Comegys with her children is with her at present. Aunt Margaret has been quite unwell for the last two or three months. She is better now. Willie sends her love and says that she will return home the last of this week, and wishes you to write to her. Aunt Ridgely is as well as usual. She sends her love. Give my compliments to Miss Mary. My love to Charlie and Mr. duPont and a kiss to Amie and Harry. Write soon, I am anxious to hear from you. With much love.

Your affectionate brother

NED

[*Addressed to* Mrs. C. I. du Pont
from Edward Ridgely]

"Aunt Margaret" is another affectionate name for Mammy Margaret. The Ridgelys who had been still living at home when their father remarried usually called their stepmother "ma." Willy Ridgely had been married, just before her father's death, to Alexander Johnson of Mispillion Hundred, Kent County, and was the mother of a son, Henry. Later she had a second son, Nicholas, and a daughter, Annie.

Ann Ridgely du Pont's only daughter, Amy, was a great pet of her older half-sister and maybe a bit spoiled. That she was a truly affectionate and home-loving person in her elder years, the writer can testify. A very serious case of homesickness was having its way with her in the following letter.

The small brother Harry seemed to be facing life more bravely.

Phila[delphia] Monday
Jan. 8th [18]59

Dearest Mother

I was sick, oh so sick, when your letter came, but had not told anyone, and determined to keep it a secret, but your letter was just a little too much and I sat down and cryed like a child, to think [that] when I would have given anything I had on earth to be home, you should think I do *not love it*, oh, dear Mother, what shall I do, to make you think I would rather be with *you*, and Papa, than in any *place or with* any body in this world, oh mother, I am so sick, I ache in every bone, and such a pain in my side, and Miss Bayard says I have a high fever, I am *crazy* to go home, I am all alone oh if I had only you to comfort me, only a mother's love, I feel as if I will never see you again. I told Miss Bayard I was going home the 1st of Feb. she said my time would not be finished until the 20, now Mother if you have any love for me, please let me come home the 1st of Feb. those last two weeks will be of little use. I long so much to be with you, I *pray* of you to write soon and say I may not wait those last two weeks, it will kill me to stay, I always feel sick in this house. Oh mother, I will do anything in the world for you if you will only let me come home in three weeks. This is not because I am sick, well, or sick, I am so anxious to get home I will study so hard if you will only say I may come home. Please write by return of mail and say I can come home the 1st of Feb.

How is your cold oh please take every care of yourself, for if you knew how I love you, you would do it, I have been unhappy ever since I came back to school to think you thought I did not love you as dearly, as I used to, oh dear mother take the word of your child that I love you with all my heart and soul. I shall be unhappy and homesick all the time if you won't let me return the 1st of Feb. If I am getting the mumps may I not come home. I beseech of you, to grant my request, tears are filling my eyes so I cannot write anymore. Give my love to Harry for his letter, and also to Papa and Molly. And I am ever your aff[ectionate] daughter

Amy.

I expect to cry all day, I so long to get home.

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Charles I. du Pont
from Amy (Amelia Elizabeth) du Pont]

Del[aware] Mil[itary] Academy Feb 11th 1860

My dear Mother

I thought I would write to you and tell you how I was getting on with my studys I like school very much I am going to try to improve and I like my studies very much. I like all of the teachers and they are so kind to me. Pleas to be sure to call for me on Satturday. I have not been much home sick I was a little the first day but I soon got over it I know all of the boys now I got all of my suit except my cap. How are all at home give my love to all pleas answer this letter as soon as you can

Your affectionate son
H R DUPONT

Mrs. DuPont: Your dear little boy has written the above letter twice over; Please keep it that you may compare it with his future epistles.

I will do my utmost to teach him to spell and write. He's a most excellent little boy & will do well.

Most truly
THEO. HYATT

[*Addressed to* Mrs. C. I. duPont
Wilmington, Del.]

The next letter is dated almost twenty-five years later from a school child, Ann Ridgely's granddaughter and namesake, Ann Ridgely du Pont. She was the daughter of Amy, whom we left a page or two back to "cry all day." Ann was at Farmington, Connecticut, at Miss Porter's School.

She mentions the Stetsons who were her cousins. This family figures in Amy du Pont's letters, for both she and her cousin Molly Ridgely visited them often. Mrs. Stetson was a granddaughter of Sally Banning's half-sister, Elizabeth. Molly was a daughter of Rev. Nicholas Ridgely, Ann Ridgely's brother. Nicholas and his wife both died young, and their daughter Molly made her home at Louviers, and afterwards on Market Street with her aunt, Ann du Pont.

Farmington
Nov. 4th '83

My dearest Grandma and
Aunt Mollie,

Both your sweet long letters have had to wait a very long time for an-

swers, but I really did not intend it should be so. I expected to write to you last Sunday, but I had a dreadful sick headache and spent all my energy in getting off Mama's letter so she would not be worried.

Quite a number of things have happened since we wrote to each other, and I am so anxious to hear how Miss Nellie McCombs wedding passed off, and about the Stetsons and Cousin Helen's visit. I am so glad Grandma dear, you met Miss Porter at the wedding. How did you like her? She came back and told me the old story of [how] charming you were. It was very, very hard to see her leave for Wilmington and know she was going to see my own dear Grandma and have to stay quietly behind.

Was it not kind, Miss Nellie McComb sent me a little box of wedding cake, enough for quite a number of us to dream on. I think it was so thoughtful as she barely knows me. We had quite a nice time last week as the grand concerts that we have every term took place. They were unusually good, we had the Philemonic Club from New York.

Oh Aunt Mollie, I am very proud I have just taken my first *Sonata*. I am trying very hard this term, for so many girls take music lessons and their playing really does not amount to anything. Of course I never expect to excel at all, but I hope to be able to play well enough to give people pleasure.

Now I will try not to give my self up to such *moral* reflexions, but try to make my letter interesting.

Is it not funny Mama thinks she has met my little room mates mother in Phila[delphia] when she used to stay there with Miss Betty Young. Lina's mother was a Miss Stille' a daughter of Dr. Stille' I think it is so queer how people turn up.

Lina is a very sweet girl not much bigger that Uncle Victor's little Sophie. I expect I have told you about our room. It is very cozy and pretty. We have a great many bright Japanese scrolls on the walls and Grandma your picture is in a place of honor where every one can see it.

I must say good night and stop this stupid scrawl, as I am so tired and sleepy I can scarcely sit at the table. Do write soon to your ever loving Granddaughter and Niece,

Much love to Uncle Harry—

ANNIE

[*Addressed to* Mrs. Chas. I. du Pont
1223 Market Street
Wilmington, Delaware]

Farmington
Nov. 9th 1884

My dearest Grandma:

I cannot commence to tell you how happy I was to get your dear sweet letter. I only hope you did not write too soon to me, and tired yourself, but it was so lovely to get it from my own dear Grandma.

Nothing has happened this week but politics, politics morning, noon and night. Every hour a different report would come, first Blaine and then Cleveland. There were three or four quite interesting discussions among the most violent Republicans and Democrats and a great deal of unkind feeling ensued between them. Now it is a forbidden subject, and every one feels more comfortable. One afternoon this week I took a walk to such a pretty old place though it has been neglected for years. Long ago the gentleman who had it was very rich and laid it out in beautiful walks flower beds & etc. there was the most exquisite little pond, with rustic seats all around and a thatched boat house, then there is a little ravine which in the spring is just covered with those wild yellow lilies. Just after he had finished his place and house this man failed and had to leave it. Some other people live in the house now but take no care whatever of the place. The girls are allowed to roam all over it and that is what we all enjoy.

There seems to be something disasterous in having a country seat in Farmington as another gentleman bought his land, had it all graded and terraced, an elaborate wall built around and then lost his money, and there it has stood for years waiting for the house. It looks so strange to see these beautiful grounds and no house. I advise you not to make any investments in country places up here dear Grandma—Mr. Warner has been so kind in writing about you in messages to me in his daughter's letters. Poor Nan is quite worried about her stepmother who has taken cold and is quite sick again. It is so nearly church time I must stop and put on my coat.

Do not try to answer my letters my dearest Grandma until you are really able but you know how I treasure every one from you. With much love to Aunt Mollie, Cousin Annie and Uncle Harry, I am

Your most devoted
Granddaughter—

I am *so glad* Mama has at last tried this dieting as I know it will do her so much good. Do keep her up to it.

Sally Ann Comegys, widow of Henry M. Ridgely, died in the old Dover home in 1887.

Ann Ridgely du Pont, after having returned from Dover where she had gone for her stepmother's funeral, wrote to Williamina's daughter, Annie Johnson of "Coon Den," near Farmington, Kent County, the "Cousin Annie" mentioned by Ann du Pont to her grandmother in 1884.

"Mr. Gassner," a clergyman, was the husband of Anne Comegys, Mrs. Sally Ann Ridgely's niece. Another niece, Elizabeth Frazer Comegys, married Edward Ridgely, Mrs. Ann du Pont's youngest brother. A daughter of this marriage, Harriet ("Hity") Ridgely, married Dr. Daniel A. Harrison, whose plea before the Delaware legislature led to the establishment of Delaware State Hospital, to which he gave the name Farnhurst. A son of Edward Ridgely, Henry, went to live in the old house on the Green in 1894, with his wife, the present narrator, and their infant daughter, Philippa Elizabeth.

Wednesday

My dearest Annie

It was so pleasant to see you again in Dover (on the really, very sad occasion we met) and did you go over the old house? Poor dear old house; it is sad to see it closed, but indeed it does look like the ghost of my youth; and will you indeed come up and help me to look over the old papers in the old garret, and we will inspect all of the rooms. Even the garret room which used to hold the "*pall*"—if we meet with any ghosts, all the better; I am, myself so near the spirit land, I don't think it would frighten me. We will look over the old books too. I shall enjoy being with you. The weather is so damp and chilly; (this house of course damp too) that much as I miss you I rejoice you are at home, where you have a fire, and will not be liable to suffer from the rain and damp as here. This weather will finish up the peaches, if the rosebugs have left any to be finished up. Ask Nick how his prospect for peaches is, and what generally is the look out for that most uncertain fruit, in Sussex and Kent. Cleaver writes me the Rosebugs are entirely destroying ours. Give my love to all, I think your father looked so well when I saw him in Dover—so much better than when I had last seen him. Mollie sends you her love, and told me to tell you that Mrs. Draper had called to

see you, and had hoped you had not gone; she was unavoidably prevented from calling when she said she would; she wished you had called to see her. Anna Lea also called upon you. Nothing new has transpired here. Ella Bradford and her sister Fanny Coleman called to see us yesterday. Poor Amy is suffering from rheumatism, but how can this be helped when it is raining the whole time. You heard about Mr. Gassner being sent on a trip to Europe by Cornelius Vanderbilt; he is lucky, isn't he? Give my love particularly to Bessie. What did her Mamma think of the proofs Garret sent her. I believe you did not think them good. I must finish this [in] time enough for the noon mail. I commenced the letter on Sunday but was so tired by the Dover trip I had to put it by and expecting a dress-maker today had to hurry on Monday—yesterday—to rip up and have the dress I wanted fixed ironed, and after all, the dress maker cannot come till Saturday.

What did you think of Dr. Harrison. I liked him very much. Hity looks very happy! Harry sends his love. Write soon dearie and tell me just how you are; burn a stick or two of wood every day in the stove in your room to dry the air. I know you have a fire down stairs but it is important you have your room dry. Again with love to your father, Ma, & Nick, I am your

Loving
Aunt

[*From* Ann duPont
Wilmington
Dela.]

Sept. 5, 1887

I just received your letter, my darling Annie, and I am too much grieved for any thing. The suffocating heat of this summer has given you those odious chills. You ought to have spent the month of August here. You kept saying while you were here that you had so short a time to be at home, you could not be with us longer, and yet you were at home long enough to get the chills. You ought to go to the mountains as soon as possible. Dear, have your bottle for the Dr. Bullocks tonic filled. Take quinine and whiskey to keep yourself up and please go away as soon as possible. I am distressed at Mrs. Powells death though I never saw her. What did she die of, her lungs or what? It is very hot here today. Mollie has gone to her Aunt Sophies. It was so icy cold at Glen Summit that she took cold. As

soon as she comes back which will be on Thursday next, she is to begin Cod liver oil and whiskey. She was run down this summer from the continuance of the excessive heat and doesn't seem as well as usual. I am still tired from my Dover trip I have been trying to look up the books there but the sets are so broken, volumes lost, etc.

I told you I had a few peaches, enough to pay for my baskets, at any rate, and they were splendid. I had about one hundred & fifty baskets at the Mill Farm and two hundred at Fox Hall, some at Cleaver's too.

. . .

Write when you are coming up on your way to Eaglesmere. I shall be so very anxious to hear from you. I pray to our Heavenly Father you may not be sick.

Your loving
Aunt

[*To* Annie Johnson,
Coon Den Farm
Farmington, Del.]
[*From* Ann Ridgely duPont
Wilmington, Dela.]

To Nicholas Johnson: [c June 10, 1889]

Monday 10th

My dear Nick

I received your kind letter and was very glad to get it, as I always am. I hope dear Nick that you will soon come up, as we all are so glad to see you whenever you can come. I am so glad that you disposed of your canned fruit before the break in the market came. I had offered me at the grocer's I deal with, a can of perfectly beautiful canned peaches at 12cts per can. They were as fresh as possible, this with corn at 36cts per bushel, makes *farms a failure.* Last year I did well, but when will I do so again? As to our darling Annie's picture, the lady who takes crayon pictures has moved away from Wilmington, though I have understood she will come here and take an order, but we cannot watch the picture, as if she was in town. Bring up all the pictures you have of her and we will see about it. Dear Annie, how I miss her! Next to my own two children, I loved her better than any one else. She was always so affectionate, and never said a cross, or unkind thing to me in her life; and we were so congenial; how happy we shall be to be to-

gether in the blessed, eternal home. You saw from the papers, that Cleveland had gone into partnership with Frank Stetson (Cousin Helen's son in law). She writes me of the time they had with the newspaper reporters, as soon as it leaked out in Washington. It was 12 O'clock at night, the servants had gone to bed, they were just going, when there came a ring at the doorbell. It was a New York reporter, another and another ring came, each paper anxious to have the news confirmed and get ahead of the others, then the Philadelphia reporters or *interviewers* came, this lasted till after one, when Frank Stetson put out the lights and went to bed. Cousin Helen said they heard them still coming up the front door steps, but as all was dark, they did not dare to ring. The next morning Col. Lamont telegraphed to Stetson to meet the President and Mrs. Cleveland at the depot. Frank S. took a carriage and with Lizzie (Cousin L) went to the depot and brought the President, Mrs. Cleveland and Col Lamont home to their own house to a quiet lunch. They were charmed with Mrs. Cleveland. Lizzie S. begged me to make her a visit, but I did not feel like going to New York this winter, though I would have liked to have seen Mrs. Cleveland.

At last Uncle Henry has finished up the estate. I do not care to sell out my interest in the lot opposite the stable for my part of the $1500 though I think it a good price, but if you and Harry and Uncle Gene would like to sell, I will buy your interests in it at the rate of $1500 for the whole. I thought I would mention this so you could do as you please about it. It is hard to invest money, and a hundred dollars a year is a good price for rent. I believe neither of your Uncles Henry and Ned care to sell. I dont know whether you and Harry and your Uncle Eugene would like to sell or not. Uncle Henry wrote to me about the offer. My love to all.

Your affectionate
Aunt.

Mr. Stetson and President Cleveland have been intimate
for a long time. Mollie and Harry send you much love.

In the following letter to J. Leroy White of Baltimore there is a picture referred to. I believe this to be the portrait of Eliza Ridgely, with her harp, now in possession of the National Art Gallery in Washington.

Ann du Pont mentions the house at Eden Hill Farm as having been built in 1740. Bills for the bricks and building show that the correct date is 1749. In the beginning of that year it was completed, and Nicholas Ridgely and his family moved into it in January.

At the end of the letter, a child is spoken of as the "sunbeam" of two houses. This was Ann Ridgely du Pont, afterwards Mrs. William Peyton. It was she who returned the collection of family letters to Dover.

From Mrs. Charles Irene duPont to a descendant of the Ridgelys of Hampton, Baltimore County, Maryland:

1223 Market Street—Wilmington, Del.
October 8th [cir. 1890]

Dear Mr. White—

Thank you very much for the photographs which I greatly prize. I enjoy looking at this lovely picture of your grandmother; her figure is particularly graceful, and her face very pretty and intellectual. I am delighted that she was a Ridgely and I have no doubt a descendant of the same old Ridgely family we claim as our ancestors. Your picture I particularly prize, it is such an agreeable souvenir of the very pleasant visit I had from you and the other members of the party. It is admissible for an old lady to say it has not done you justice, but still it is so like you that I greatly thank you for it.

I will send you for Mrs. Buckler a photograph of the house Nicholas Ridgely built on his plantation (Eden Hill) in 1740. He lived and died there; it was also the home of his grandson Chancellor Nicholas Ridgely and is now the property of my brother Dr. [Henry] Ridgely. I wish to copy the short sketch of Nicholas Ridgely published in the Magazine of the Pennsylvania Historical Society to send with the photograph as your Mother may not have seen it. I regret I had not attended to this matter before Mrs. Buckler sailed, but you will do me the favor of keeping them for her. I hope you have heard of the safe arrival of your mother and brother and that they had a pleasant voyage. I will send the photograph of the house etc. in about ten days. I am truly sorry the Dulaney papers, were not better cared for by my father's widow. If she had only given them to me I would have delighted in preserving them for the Dulaney family. I think I mentioned

that at my father's death his widow was left a life estate in the house, and all it contained. She outlived him forty years. The office was rented, and during that length of years, the papers were left in an uncovered box, a prey to the elements and the rats, in an old loft, which after a time leaked. At my step-mother's death I directed them to be gathered up and sent in bags to me, to rescue what I could of them, as my brothers had not the patience to do it. I received eight three bushel bags of them, a heterogeneous mass of old parchment deeds in a wretched state of decay; legal papers, social letters of the Dulaney's, their business papers of the sales of iron & tobacco; Social, business, and legal papers of the Ridgelys even to modern times. Social and business letters of Governor Comegys, (my step-mother's father). I read a very few, but they were all engrossed and those which were not in a state of decay, I saved. Excuse me Mr. White for wearying you with this lengthened detail. I am strangely forgetting myself in thus boring you, but your allusion to Mrs. Ridgelys papers reminded me of the task I had gone through. There were four bags of Dulaney papers. If they could have been preserved what a history of those early times they would have given. My father was Mr. Dulaney's friend, legal adviser, and executor. I threw the Ridgely papers in a large empty trunk and have yet to look over them. I doubt whether I will find anything of the genealogy of the family as the oldest papers were in the possession of Chancellor Ridgely and were destroyed at his death. These details should have been for your Cousin, Mrs. Ridgely, and I must again beg your forgiveness for troubling you with them, but my excuse is that I am quite alone. My son is at his sister's for the day and my niece Mollie Ridgely is visiting a friend in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and it is pleasant to write; besides, I have had a disappointment in not seeing my grand-daughter to day, but her father is sick and she is a sunbeam in either house.

With kind regards to yourself I am
dear Mr. White,
Very sincerely
Yours
ANN R. DUPONT

To J. Leroy White, Baltimore.

A Letter to My Grandchildren

Ridgely House
Dover Green
January, 1948

My dear Grandchildren,

This book is for you. Not until you have lived to see several decades pass, bringing changes with them, will you be curious about what went before. Then perhaps you will be interested to learn that although inventions and modern ways of thought make the pattern of living very different from that of your forebears, yet the same problems confronted them, and their lives were directed by the same impulses and ambitions that animate your own. I hope you will come to know, as I have, some of these early members of the family and will discover that, though earlier, they are not older. In their letters, many of them are still and will always be, gay and young.

I could add "a moral to adorn the tale," but I do not think it the mission of elders to preach. Theirs is to sit on the spectators' bench and watch the present game. Theirs, to applaud when there is an outstanding play. So many of your age have made these plays, that my palms ache from so much clapping.

I must close with one regret: that this collection cannot include the letters of the Ridgely who was the most courageous, delightful and understanding of them all—your Grandfather.

Affectionately,

Marcel Lloyd Ridgely.

The Moore Family of South Carolina and Pennsylvania

Daniel Axtell
Landgrave of S. Carolina Colony
m. Rebecca . . .

Rebecca Axtell
b. in England
d. 1749, at "Moore Hall," Chester Co., Pa.

John Moore
b. *c.* 1659 in England
d. Dec. 2, 1732, in Phila.
Of the Moores of Fawley, Berks., England.
Came from England to South Carolina *c.* 1698.

Married before 1685
in South Carolina

*William Moore
b. May 6, 1699, Philadelphia, Pa.
d. May 30, 1782, "Moore Hall," Chester Co., Pa.
Resided chiefly at Moore Hall, near Valley Forge, and Philadelphia.

m. 1722 in
Philadelphia

*Williamina Wemyss
b. *c.* 1704, in Scotland
d. Dec. 6, 1784, "Moore Hall," Chester Co., Pa.
Dau. of James and Betty (Lock) Wemyss of the House of Wemyss of Fifeshire.

Daniel Moore
Resided in England

Frances Moore
m. Thomas Erskine
April 21, 1770

Williamina Moore
m. Phineas Bond

Rebecca Moore
m. Provost William Smith

Thomas William Moore
m. Ann Langdon

Ann Moore
b. Oct. 4, 1732
d. Dec. 20, 1810
m. June 2, 1774
Dr. Charles Greenberry Ridgely
(see Ridgely chart)

James Wemyss Moore

For offices held by the Moores see text of this volume.

* Their gravestones form the pavement of the vestibule of St. David's Church, Radnor.

Compiled from the manuscript family history, *Records of the Ridgely and Moore Families*, by Mary Tilden Ridgely, 1897-1898, *The Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.*, by Horace Wemyss Smith, 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1880, and other information assembled by Francis Waring Robinson, 1948.

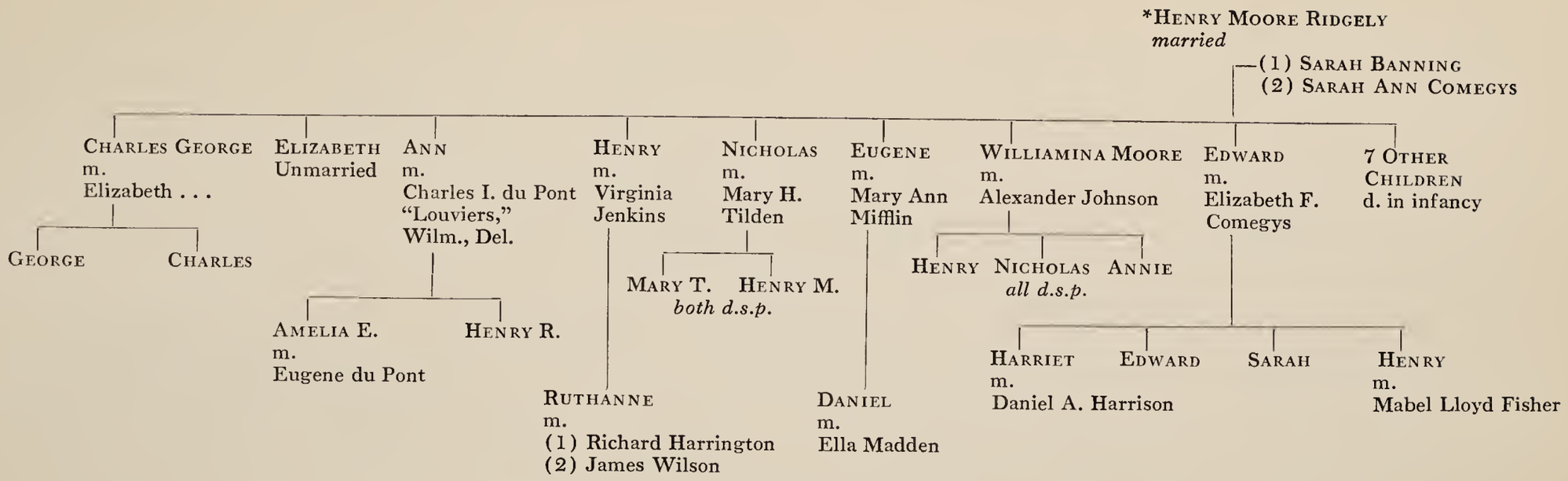
The Ridgely Family of Maryland and Delaware

*Henry Ridgely *married* (1) Elizabeth Howard
Came from England to Maryland in 1659, resided at "Catlin" near Annapolis, Maryland — Who came with her husband from England to Maryland in 1659

(2) Sarah ?
(3) Mary Stanton

- Henry, married 1689 Katherine Greenberry
  - Henry
  - *Nicholas *married* (1) Sarah Worthington in Ann Arundel; (2) Ann French, b. 1702, d. 1733, widow of James Gordon of New Castle, Del.; (3) Mary Middleton, widow of Benj. Vining of Salem, N. J.
    - Sarah
    - Rebecca
    - Rachel
    - Ruth
    - Ann
    - Mary, no issue
    - *Charles Greenberry *married* (1) Mary Wyncoop; (2) Ann Moore (see Moore Chart)
      - Nicholas — Mary Brereton
      - Charles
      - Abraham — Hester Harris
      - John
      - Mary
      - Williamina
      - Mary — m. William Winder Morris
        - William R. Morris, m. Catharine H. Harris
          - Mary, m. Caleb S. Pennewill
          - Walter, m. (1) Ella D. Reed; (2) Anna L. Moore
          - Julia
        - Anna Maria, m. Caleb S. Layton
        - Emily
        - Others, d. in infancy
      - Henry Moore's Descendants, Page following
      - George Wemyss
      - Ann
    - Nicholas
    - Sarah
    - Elizabeth
  - Charles
  - Ann
  - Elizabeth
- Rachel
- Charles
- Sarah

* For offices held by him see introduction to this volume.



Family charts adapted from those compiled by Francis Waring Robinson, 1948, from the manuscript family history, *Records of the Ridgely and Moore Families*, by Mary Tilden Ridgely, 1897-1898, *The Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.*, by Horace Wemyss Smith, 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1880, and other information.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

Chronological List

of Some Events of Historic Moment alluded to in these Informal Letters

1753	Philadelphia Academy, rupture between the trustees and the master, David James Dove,	8-10
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1798	Board, Price of, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, for law students,	112
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1798	"Washington's March" ("Hail Columbia"), enthusiasm at theatre, Philadelphia,	118-121
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1798	Anti-French sentiment, black cockades,	118-119, 126
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GLOSSARY

Glossary

Some Words Used in Eighteenth-Century Letters in This Volume

Assistance	Presence, attendance.
Assistant	One who attends or remains by. Often used in connection with social functions.
Bane	Ruin, harm, woe.
Bettering House	In Philadelphia a refuge for indigent females. It provided them with employment and shelter.
Bobbin	A fine cord or narrow braid used in infants' and adults' fine clothing. Often made with fine thread and needle by hand.
Brocade	A textile fabric woven with raised figures; originally in gold or silver; used for handsome costumes and fine upholstery. Spitalfield brocades made near London, and brocades from France were imported for use in the Colonies in the eighteenth century.
Buck Muslin	A stiffened cotton cloth. Often used under paniers.
Calamanco	A glossy woolen stuff of Flanders, chequered in the warp in such a way that the checks are seen on one side only.
Callico	Printed cotton cloth; printed chintz.
Chair	A seat to set on, a Sedan or open chaise, a light open chariot used with one horse. Dictionary 1733, N. Bailey, London.
Chemise	Sometimes a long clinging dress, short waisted, often with short sleeves and open neck. Mrs. Abigail Adams considered such dresses immodest. They were often worn at the President's soirees in Philadelphia.
Chimney Back	Heavy iron sheet placed against back of chimney to radiate heat from logs. Often pedimented and elaborately moulded.
Clever	Agreeable, amiable.
Commence	Of schools: take a degree.
Complaisance	Desire and care to please.
Complaisant	Disposed to please, obliging.
Convenient	Suitable, appropriate, proper.
Cravat	Linen edged with lace worn around the neck and often tied in a bow.
Curtain	A veil-like drapery attached to a bonnet so it could cover the face.

Cyons	Scions, slips for grafting.
Cypher	*n.* A device, monogram. *v.* To figure or compute.
Decay	*n.* Decline of vital energy, wasting away. *v.* To fall off in energy, health or beauty.
Desire	In letters "Desire their love," to send their love.
Dollar	Peso or piece-of-eight of Spain containing eight reales. Largely used in North America in eighteenth century when American dollars were few.
Duty	Homage, reverence due, respect.
Genteel	Of behavior: polite, obliging, gentle. Genteel accomplishments.
Ipecacuana	A drug made from the root of a plant of this name causing nausea and purging.
Jaconet Muslin	Plain cotton fabric heavier than mull and lighter than shirting.
Jump	A kind of under bodice worn by women, especially in the eighteenth century; often used instead of stays. Jumps: a pair of jumps. Less stiff and formal than the corsets of that period.
Mansion	An abiding place, a dwelling.
Mantua	Silk named from the town of its manufacture in Italy.
Meschienza	A magnificent ball given in May 1778 in honor of General Howe by junior officers of the British Army then occupying Philadelphia. The belles of Philadelphia, not all of whom were Tories, attended, almost without exception.
Middling well	Fairly well, not very well in health.
Minute down	To make note of.
Occasion	Requirement, need, want.
Overset	To upset, to capsize. "The postilion overset the carriage"—Miss Burney. The shallop overset in the bay.
Palatine fever	Epidemic fever in Philadelphia in 1754, supposed to have originated among the Palatine Germans.
Palatine stove plates	Stove plates made by Germans at New Briton and at Durham Furnace, Pottsville, Pennsylvania. Heavy ornamental and rectangular iron. Sometimes used in fireplaces to radiate heat from the logs.
Plantation	Estate or farm.
Recommend	To commend.
Respectable	Of good or fair social standing.

Russian sheeting	Heavy linen sheeting used for covering feather beds or mattresses and for lining trunks or boxes. Also used for army tents.
Rose	A flower called the flower of Venus, consecrated by Cupid to Harpocrates, the God of Silence. Dictionary 1733.
Sacking	Coarse cloth stretched across bedstead to support mattress and feather bed. Bedstead so equipped called sacking bottom bed.
Service	In complimentary expressions: respect, duty.
Shagg	A cloth having a long nap usually of worsted.
Shallop	Shaloupe—French; perhaps Dutch Sloep. A large heavy boat fitted with one or more masts and carrying fore and aft, or lug sails; a sloop in sixteenth century. In eighteenth century in Delaware Bay possibly smaller and drawing little water. Shallops docked in the small streams penetrating the coast and did most of the carrying.
Situation	Position of affairs, combination of circumstances.
Stormont	A material used for dresses or upholstery of Damask type.
Tambour	*n.* A species of embroidery in which patterns are worked with a needle of peculiar form on fine cloth stretched on a tambour frame. *v.* To embroider as above.
Tambour frame	A circular frame in which muslin or other soft material is stretched for embroidering.
Tambour'd Muslin	Fine sheer cotton embroidered in delicate patterns.
Tunic, Tunick	A belted frock or smock worn by children.
Visitation	A social visit prolonged beyond the usual period.
Waited on	Said of a person who attended another in social affairs, as a bridesmaid waited on the bride.

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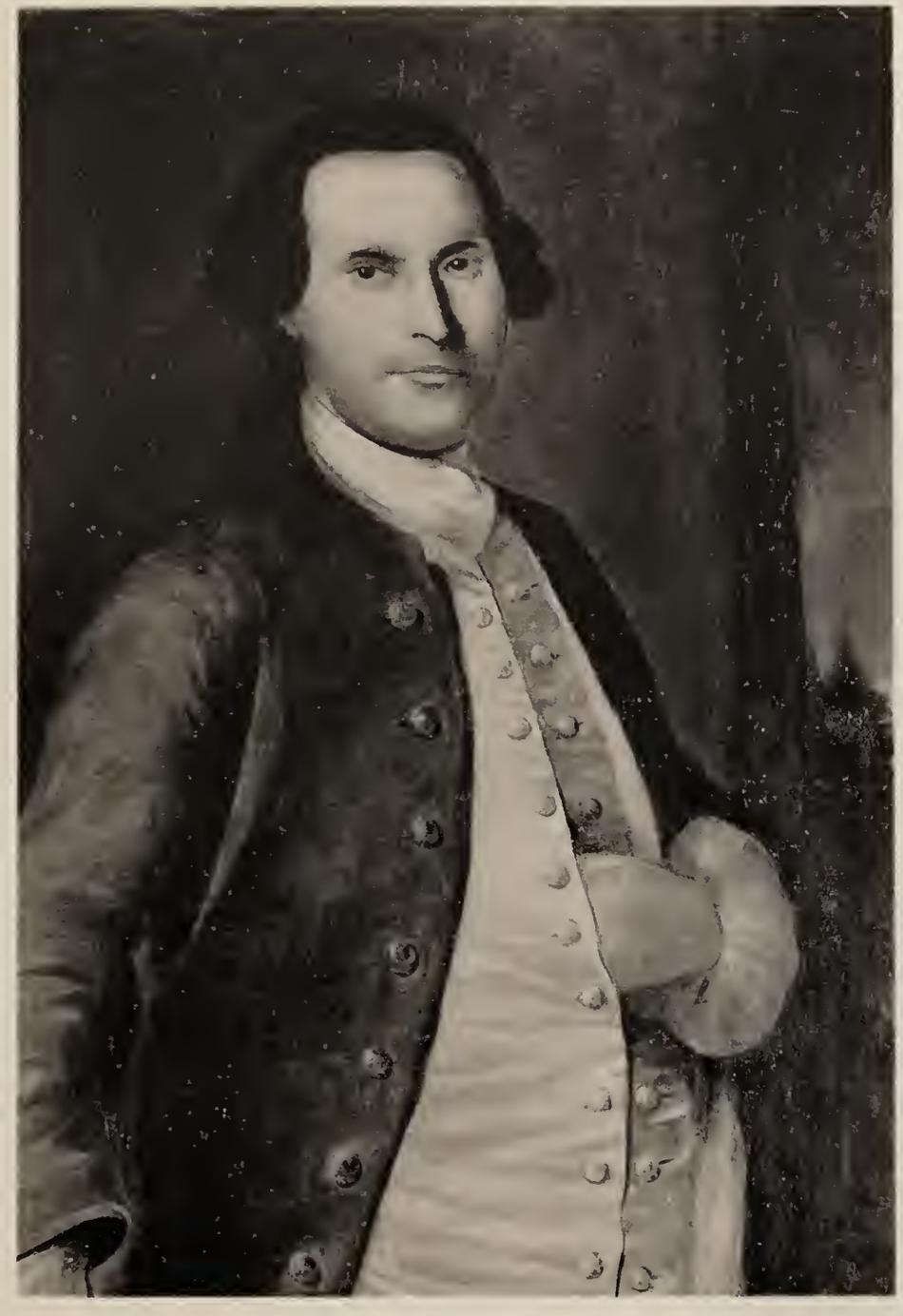

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RUHAMAH MARIM, WIFE OF CORNELIUS P. COMEGYS
ARTIST UNKNOWN

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PEACH ORCHARD, "EDEN HILL" FARM

OLD GATE HOUSE, "EDEN HILL" FARM

No. 27

No. 28. BARN AT "EDEN HILL"

No. 29. OLD WILLOW OF ANCIENT STOCK, "EDEN HILL"

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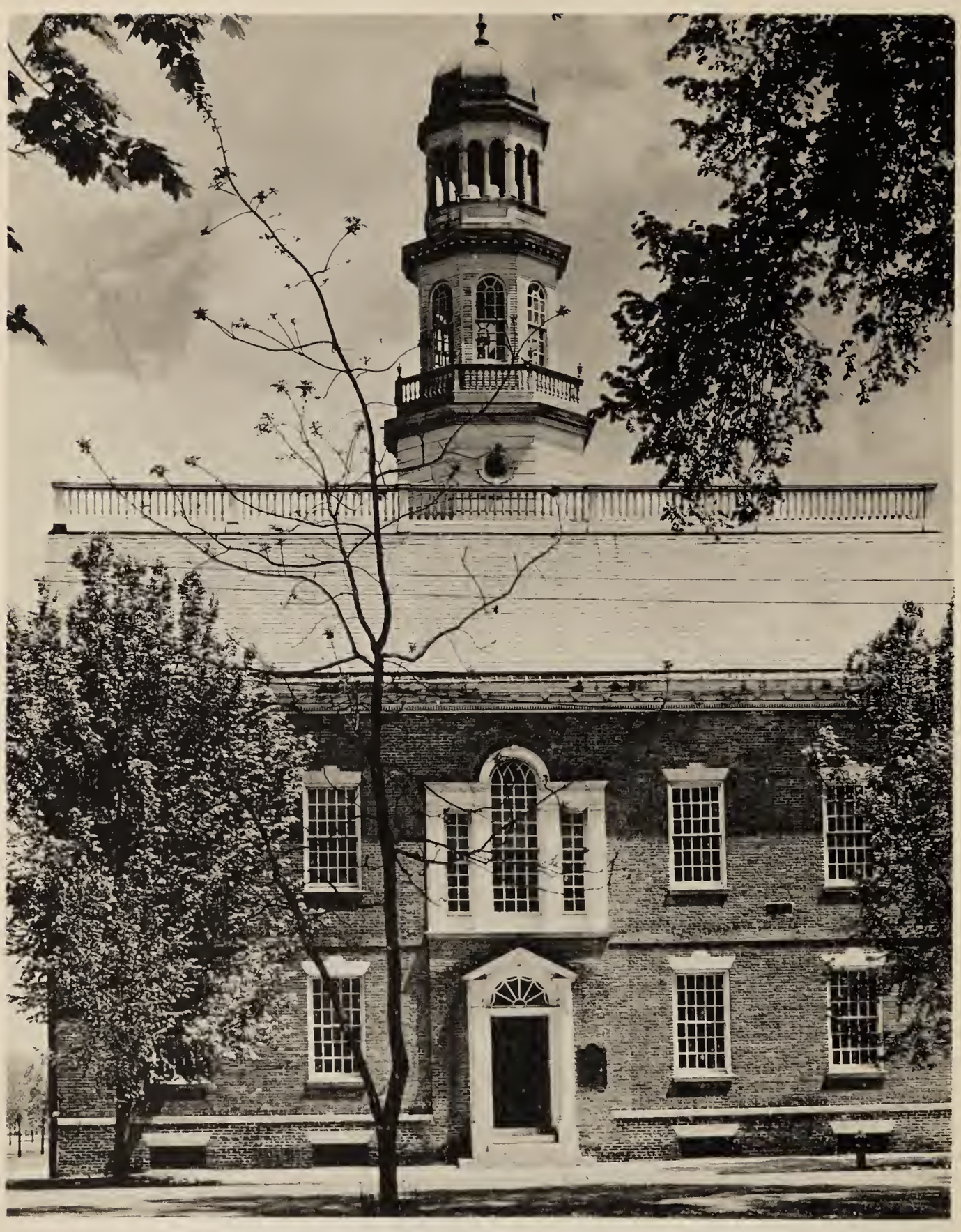
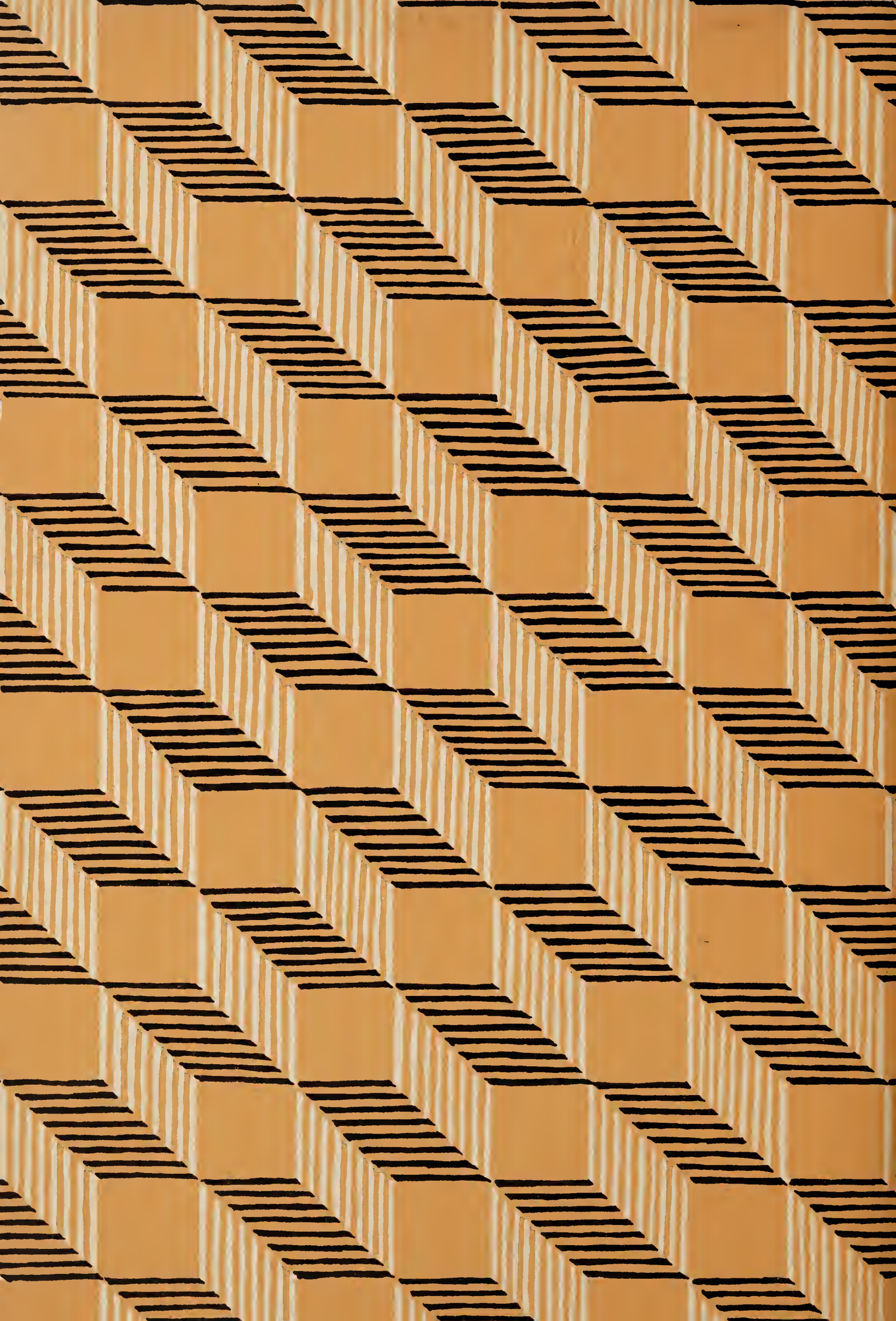
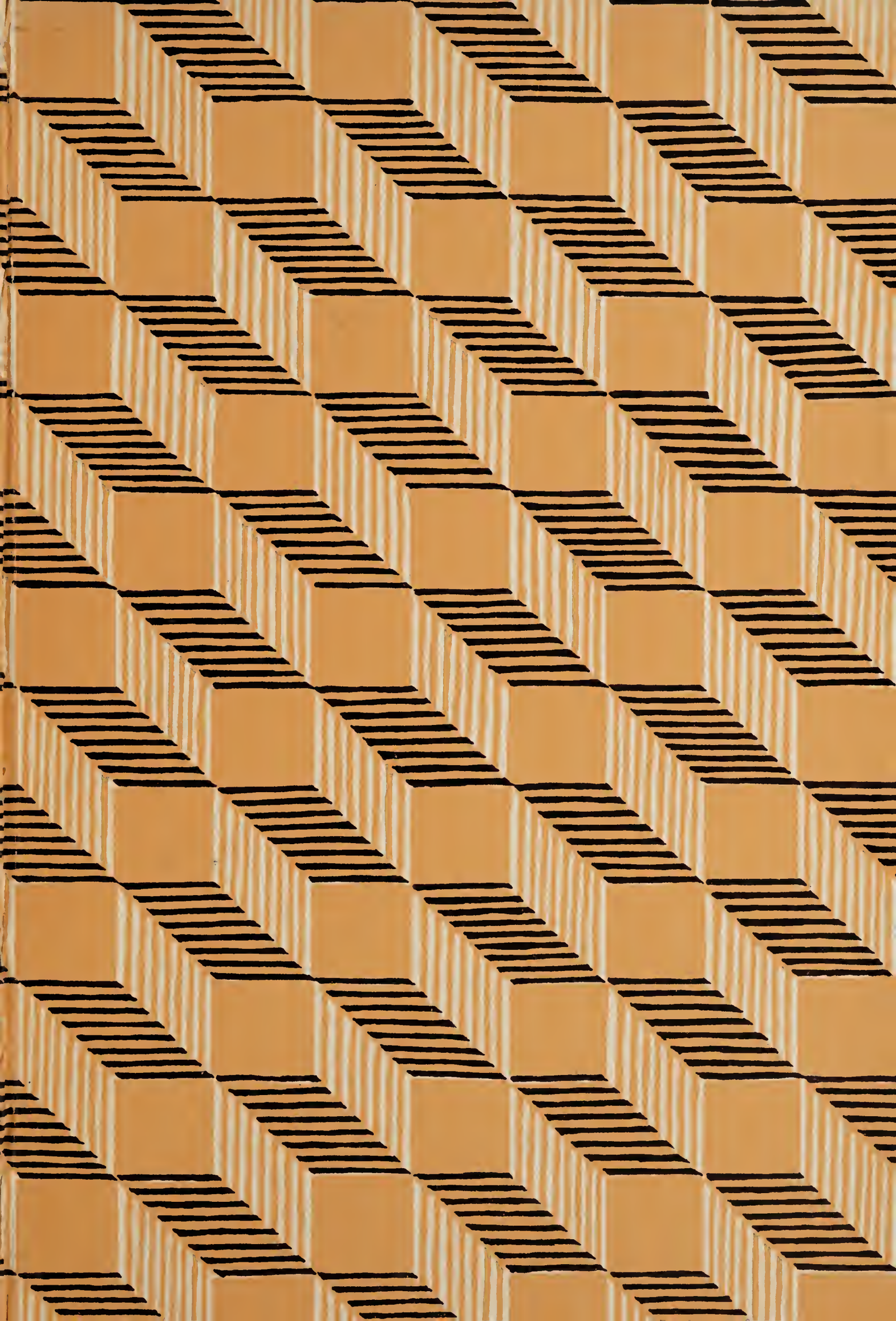
No. 31. RIDGELY GRAVES IN CHRIST CHURCH YARD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